

FERENC GLATZ

September 11 and Science

A diagnosis must be offered

“Only a fool will think that the doctor is at fault when he announces his unfavourable diagnosis” – I have noted in my diary once, for the second and third time during the last month and a half. The terrorist act of September 11 is a symptom of general changes. It is their symptom and, at the same time, their sign. It is a signs of a slow change in the social- and world systems. I have repeated this again and again for the benefit of my friends, for reporters and practicing politicians. Most of them smiled politely, shook their heads unconvinced, and when they thought that I could not see it, shrugged. It was as if they believed that I wanted to lessen the measure of sorrow, or the horror of terror. I had no intention of doing either of them! But September 11 was not simply an act of terror. I repeated to myself that the diagnosis must be stated openly – even if it did not please our friends.

I still believe in the truth of this statement – as I continue writing these sentences, this analysis in my diary – yet we do not discuss it. We are the committed researchers of the conditions of society, the same way as physicians are the students of the ills of the human body. Yet we are keeping our silence because we believe that the sobriety of the analysis will appear to contradict the grief of the mourners. Or it is also possible that many of us do not want to notice that behind the attack there have been signs of a gradually mounting world-crisis. Or we are afraid to say to the patient – to society, to the leading politicians and strategists of our age, – that there is a dangerous sickness hidden in the organs of world society and only one of its manifestations was the outbreak of September 11.

The world has been watching the events of the last month and a half with trepidation. The airplane attack against the World Trade Center forced politicians and military strategists to take immediate action; they felt that they “had to tell” people what to do. Because something had to be done, and that, immediately...

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After a month and a half have passed – with military successes but with no real political results – attention has turned toward science. In other words, the time has come for us to talk! We, the researchers had time, had a month and a half, for the analysis of the series of events in question and to hold consultations. We must break the silence now, on the Day of Science. We must state some of our deductions, or even our hypothetical judgments, our suppositions.

One of the world's most respected journals, *The Economist*, wrote that September 11 "was a day that changed the world." I would say that it was a day that made us realize that the *world has been changing for a long time*.

What happened in New York had been the consequence of decades long social,- ethnic,- and economic conflicts. Many people – ourselves included – have called attention to the divisive forces of these conflicts during the last two decades, but neither the European nor the American middle classes listened because they have been living mesmerized by the boom in the world economy and technology. The reasons for these attitudes could be found in the myriads of threads connecting them to the economic and technological boom, or because people have become accustomed to attitudes disregarding the difficulties and conflicts. This is the explanation for the fact that when long-simmering crises explode on the scene, the world is unprepared for them. They are unexpected.

The Crisis of Our Days; Private Empires in the Age of the Information Revolution

The man of our age was surprised by the fact that the world's current center of economic and political power was attacked not by another state.

Because the well-prepared terrorist attack was planned by a religious and private empire. We have been warning people about our conviction that we must abandon in our thinking the pedestal raised beneath the state. We have reminded people that the globalization of the 20th century is *in the process of dismantling a world order based on a state-system*. Following this development, powerful international private company-empires have emerged, and their economic power exceeds those of medium-sized states. One consequence has been the fact that the new systems of production – and the identification its employees, the identification with the companies in question – go beyond the primacy of *identification with the state, with principles of citizenship* in the consciousness of the people. The building of a new system of interests has been accelerated, and this system is fundamentally different from the world order based on states.

Historians have already issued several warnings that such a development could revive the pluralism of power – well known from the Middle Ages – when the territorial authority of a great lord or of a church could rival for centuries that of the system of states. The power of such great international organizers of

production could force the leaders of states onto their knees. Who can tell the real purposes of these new types of empires in organizing their forces? However, it is certainly an act without precedent that an international group of capitalists would mobilize billions in the interest of an ideology, and would use its means for purposes of a civil war. Similarly, we have not been prepared for modern technology – first of all, the technology of information transmission – to produce such actions, such organization of actions which is unusual in the century of warfare conducted by states.

In fact, the world has only been prepared for warfare among states since the 17th century. (Let us add; even civil wars have always been fought as part of warfare among the states.) The great ideological conflicts in the world – Fascism, Communism, democracy – turned into wars among states. According to the logic of modern political institutions, *states are the organizational units of world culture*; ideological-political conflicts are being fought on their territories, and whichever ideology comes out on top, will use the power of the state organs for its internal security, its diplomatic and military power. While liberal democracy has prevailed in the United States and the western parts of Europe for the last century and a half, in the central parts of Europe and in its eastern half, democracies and dictatorships have followed each other in turn. Ideologies of capitalism, socialism and national socialism became dominant in several states and conflicts ensued among these formations.

However, we must acknowledge the fact that behind the attack, which was the equivalent of a declaration of war, there has been but a *private empire and a religious organization*, and not a state. Whoever committed the crime – and even today one cannot exactly prove which organizations was behind this terrible act – it is a fact that neither Afghanistan, called the homeland of world terrorism, nor any other state may be identified as the unquestioned culprit...

However, let us list our deductions.

As I said above, I have the audacious duty to announce my deductions in order to call my friends for a consultation. And I repeat my conviction that only a fool will fault the physician when he announces his unfavourable diagnosis. I trust that the stoning will not befall the analyst because he writes or announces sentences unpleasant for the listeners; no matter how much he sympathizes with the mourners, he cannot himself be the mourner of the dead.

Yesterday: the Cold War

What worried us in the past concerning our civilization? The crises threatening the world in the course of the 20th century have moved along the dividing lines within Judeo-Christian culture. We have seen the danger in the conflicts between liberal democracies and dictatorships, then in the clash between the

capitalist and the Soviet-type socialist camps. Europe (including parts of Europe occupied by the Soviet Union) and America (including parts outside the United States) felt threatened by the “other” camp of the Judeo-Christian culture. Other tensions – including social and ethnic conflicts emerging outside our cultural area, in Asia, India, Africa and South America – we had considered to be the *residue of our internal conflicts*. We paid attention to them only to the extent as they were taking sides in our own internal cultural conflicts. The Soviet Union was afraid of the United States, of the conquests of world capitalism; the United States was fearful of the Soviet Union, which it equated with communism. They both invested billions of dollars in arms for the coming global conflict, for the creation of arms capable of reaching the other’s territory, or defending their own. They invested funds at first in airplanes, then in rockets and finally in preparation for a war in the stars.

The propaganda for this foolish arms race is coming to an end in our days. September 11 finally made it clear; we must rethink and reconsider if it is still possible to accept the domination of this huge armament structure over the world, (built between 1939 and 1990) after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This structure has developed an independent existence and created the strongest *infrastructure of armament technology* during the Second World War and the Cold War, and had become the most powerful *economic-technological-scientific* lobby in the world. This is a very extensive lobby, because the large state investments in armaments and technology – the money of the taxpaying citizen is always the best guarantee of investments – that has created new factories, new bases of science and technology, new opportunities for employment – and these enforced their interests in politics, in state investments, and in the scientific communities. People employed in these spheres know quite well who is interested in their support and maintenance (be they leaders of armament factories, labourers or physicists, or even political scientists). However, the hidden realities are finally seeing daylight. We are beginning to realize that the threat to our civilization is not coming from one or another of the political systems. We must face entirely different conflicts originating in a global-social way of thinking. We must consider these conflicts as coming from concepts of *different aims in life*.

It is possible that political scientists will finally realize that they have miscalculated during the last decades. After the United States, together with the liberal democracies, defeated the Soviet-style political systems and destroyed the Eurasian military power, it became obvious that first the Soviet Union, and then the Americans miscalculated. By now, we are familiar with the basic political documents of the last 50 years. We can assert (no matter if the political and technological players, who had successfully maneuvered over the waves of the Cold War, dislike this assertion) that neither the United States, nor the Soviet Union had planned for the destruction or conquest of the territory of their opponent.

How much sense was there in the expenses spent on star wars? Historians, physicists, biologists, usually enumerate the benefits derived from the programs of the star wars for humankind. We keep asserting that this program brought about space research and the modern offshoots of atomic physics, landscape-biology, and even biological-genetic studies. The development of modern tools – including the technology of information transmission – received giant contributions and encouragement from the foolishness of the Cold War. These factors even provided intellectual challenges for physicists, biologists, chemists and mathematicians. We can be sure that, besides the tremendous waste of material energy, besides its spiritually destructive force that will effect generations, the age brought along benefits as well.

But we must also declare the aims of the Cold War to have been false. And the greatest damage done by them was their infection of human thinking. It was an intellectual infection. Coercion, suspiciousness, confrontations, hatred of aliens, all became world-wide phenomena. Such attitudes have triumphed both in the East and the West. Why was it necessary to suppress forces by political means (by administrative means in the Soviet Union), or through manipulations, when they illustrated the social ills of both state systems whose reflections appeared in other areas of the world? Why was the notion denied that the aim of society is not only the development of technological means, but also the improvement of the totality of the quality of human life? The alertness, the constant readiness for self-defence demanded blind internal obedience. Why was it necessary to declare people to be enemies when they discussed human-cultural equality of opportunity, those who spoke about the mitigation of poverty in society, or about the equality of peoples living outside Europe or America, or about stopping the exploitation of nature? Why was it necessary to label those who discussed the internal tensions of societies as bourgeois or communists or even anarchists? Because mutual threats favoured political actors who were creating conflicts whether they stood on the pinnacle of power or were only everyday participants in local administrations, or in the workplace. They were inclined to exploit suspicion, exclusiveness, and were attracted to dictatorial means. We can see today that the safety of the world is not being threatened by communists or Martians, or by radical anti-communists, but by the global dimensions of social, cultural and human tensions.

The supposition that, following the collapse of the Soviet system, an emerging power outside Europe, perhaps a group of Islamic states, will attack the United States or an alliance of countries belonging to the Judeo-Christian culture area, also proved erroneous.

Today: Internal Tensions

It also became clear on September 11 that the greatest attack against our system will come from *within*. The student who came to Hamburg from the Near East and lived in the West for eight years, was an excellent student at a German university, already a member of our liberal democratic system. The kind of terrorist, who placed himself outside the laws of our states and fanatically subordinated the lives of thousands to its own ideology by flying into a tower of a building, had already been a member of our culture, whether we like it or not. In fact, our culture – even if we, social scientists, reiterate it over and over again seemingly in vain – has become a mixed one. The marvellous principle of freedom of the United States turned the tight world of beliefs of the thousand year old Judeo Christian culture upside down. Free-trader England brought into the island nation elements of Buddhist and Shintoist culture through its world-conquests in the 18th and 19th centuries. But the real destruction of the unity of this cultural sphere was completed by the United States when it acted as the melting pot of peoples. All this has happened during the last three decades when Arab, Chinese, Japanese and Indian ethnic elements let down roots in the New World. (It should be noted that something similar has been happening in Europe since the 1960's, especially with the arrival of North Africans and Turks to France and Germany. Not to speak of the continuing immigration to England!)

These domiciled peoples, no matter how much they tended to become Americans (or the Turks on our continent becoming Europeans) still identify with the customs and relations in their earlier homelands in the Arabian and Asian countries, in Turkey, India, China, etc. These 20th century immigrants are useful taxpaying citizens and customers in our stores, they are our neighbors in the communities, in the hotels. They live among us and we live in close brotherly relations with them. They are at our mercy – at least this is how they feel. However, we know since September 11, that we are also at their mercy. They are using the institutions of liberal democracy, accepting the opportunities offered by it, but they are also exploiting our institutions for other purposes. These purposes have been formulated at some other region of the world, and are parts of a different ethical order.

We have been saying for decades that living together means mutuality. We must scrutinize this *new mutuality*, the new elements of religion, of varying lifestyles. If the ethical standards of the new inhabitants differ from ours, the differences may bring about *social conflicts*. If the ideas of my neighbour differ from mine concerning the value of human life, of private property, then tomorrow he will take away my tools because, to him, this is not stealing, but part of a natural human behaviour pattern. Tomorrow he might take my life, because for him, life in this world, including his own, is not of great value.

Consequently, societies living in the Judeo-Christian culture area must study their own populations. It is possible that for the practitioners of natural sciences this means an unimportant, “inexact” technique,” yet human beings – including the researchers of nature – cannot be simply described in terms of biological or chemical units. These elements must become the subjects for scientific study. If we neglected the study of the new social-ethical-ethnic-religious elements, we will soon find that our fellow neighbours living next door to us – in the same street or in a hotel – will destroy, or detonate our technical infrastructure and turn against our thousand-year old human aims in a way that we cannot understand. (We must add to all this that new, radical movements may emerge not only among those born in cultures outside Europe, and who turn against our centuries-old principles, but there are also others who are unwilling to accept our millennium-old ethical order.)

We must study this new mixture of cultures and will have to develop new methods for an ideological dialogue. It is not possible to turn our community life into a police-state in which every person, every act must be scrutinized – in transportation, in production, in the postal service, in schools, in offices.

Recognition of the Violent

What is to be done? This is what people are asking us, scholars, after the demonstrations and military deployment – the latter of which did not show much result. The political muscle-flexing, salted with political mumbo-jumbo for winning votes, neutralizes a segment of society. Unfortunately, it does. And the “terror business” creates disgust in people’s minds. Our belief in the might of arms, costing enormous sums, suitable even for star wars, has become uncertain. We see with surprise that peoples appearing to be the most primitive are outsmarting those who have grown fat over the inventions of the most modern physical and chemical weaponry, and move the targets of the most sophisticated laser-guided arms among dwellings of communities, hospitals, food storages and schools. Researchers of nature, proud of their titles, and well-paid political scientists had failed when challenged by goat herders. We might say that they are taking advantage of the fact that we do not want to create a blood bath.

After recovering from the surprise caused by the disaster and the mourning of the victims, people are turning to the “physicians” because they are afraid of future calamities, of more dead.

They are expecting a solution coming not from the physicists or from technology, but from the *researchers of society*. They sense that we are facing a conflict situation that cannot be solved by lasers, airplanes, and bombs. And we are saying; human beings should be better understood; we must better understand the community of the living, those full of feelings, of people of faith

and of disappointment. We should understand our own society better and the society of the few who had attacked us. *We must understand the human beings who had attacked us yesterday.* We must define the reasons for which they had turned against us, and for whose sake they want to destroy our world by a holy war. We can now see that not only material interests and advantages, but “blind faith” has also become a historical category today, and that human beings are not simply tool makers and tool possessor entities.

Questions of Self Criticism

About the Global Measure of Our Humanity

First of all, we will pose self-critical questions for ourselves; are we keeping in step in our thinking about humanity, society and economic globalization with views about humanity?

As a consequence of the industrial-technological revolutions of the 19th -20th century, production has already been globalized. After the Second World War, the globalization of security policies followed, and in the 1990's policies concerning environmental protection followed suit. In other words, we had become capable of considering economic life, the production of tools and even the relations between the natural environment and humanity on a global level. However, have we become capable of viewing relations between men and men on a global level? Are we willing to consider societies living in any part of the globe as manifestations of our own humanity, *as our equals and describe them while using the same categories?* We are reaching time and time again the concept of terrorism after September 11. We must describe social forces placing themselves outside the laws of local societies, those that want to fight for their own truths with weapons and coercion outside the laws. But where do political science, societal research stand in all this?

Historians are well aware of the fact that Fascists called people terrorists who demolished trains in the occupied territories and fought against their rule by means that were not part of the “regular war” fought between states. Democrats called them *heroes of freedom* and we are still calling them by that term. Then in the Soviet zone of occupation terrorists were those who had the courage to perform acts – sometimes violent acts – against the institutions of the Soviet system. In the 1960's, guerrillas were called terrorists when they fought civil wars against regimes, that is, states, friendly with the United States of America, France or even the Soviet Union. Today, not only historians, but students of society are also asking the questions: “do we have a general, globally acceptable concept of ‘terrorism’ which is independent of political systems?” Do

we even have a general concept of social science? The older generation of historians also remember the fact that 20 years ago during the Afghan war of the Soviet Union the Free World called the same Taliban freedom fighters which are now being called terrorists.

How much can society believe us, researchers, and practitioners of social science? Is there any justification in the supposition that, similarly to the inventors and manufacturers of miracle weapons, and the scientific organizations standing behind them, we, the students of society, also depend on great power selfishness and economic interests? Would it not be necessary to re-evaluate the code of conduct of the political elites of the great powers? Re-evaluate their struggles against each other? Is there such a thing as a code of conduct today at all? As a general question; should not the political decision makers themselves adhere to some form of ethical norms?

Concerning Economic Interests

We are being asked; "is it true that there are economic interests behind the current conflicts? Is it true that the history of our times is being written as a reflection of the struggle over oil, of obtaining hold over strategic bases in the world?" The terrorists are supposed to be poor people. And the millions of, or even hundreds of millions of people living in the atmosphere of such religious fanaticism are also poor. But who are those who raise their fanaticism and provide shelter and money for them? What sort of resentment fuels the thinking of the local elites, living on and being enriched by oil in the Arab world, against Europeans and Americans? They want to use the treasures and strategic bases of their land for their own benefit. Do they want to enjoy the extra profit by themselves? We were also (and even exclusively) interested in these lands, in the people living there. Here is another question concerning economic interests; "why have we not raised our voices in the last decades when genocides were being committed in territories that were not economically important? Almost before our eyes the inner-African Hutus and Tutsis murdered hundreds of thousands of each other, while the leading world powers cynically participated (at least in our minds) in the massacres. Or why are we remaining silent about the Western Sahara, and the inhuman conditions existing in other parts of the world?"

A World with a Single Power-Center?

Is it possible that economic interests are not the most important factors? Was September 11 the result of a faulty manifestation of power politics? Is it the result of a policy that did not consider the fact that one single power (today the

USA) is incapable of achieving political balance among the competing ethnic forces of the globe? We are only beginning to realize the role the Soviet Union had played in this process (both negative and positive), encouraging modernization in Asia on the one hand and on the other strengthening illusory political centers.

Differences in the Development of Cultures

The question is being raised; “would it not be worth more than any armament if we spent more funds for *achieving a better understanding between different cultures?* Because Afghanistan is being bombed, but I hope that by tomorrow, the money spent on the superbombs will be turned over to fund schools and health care. I hope that the new schools will satisfy the needs of modernization not according our arrogant notions, but based on the needs of local society. The human conflicts of a globalizing world cannot be solved in the face of such cultural differences. We also need imagination for the *perspective of the future modernization of the entire globe.* Civilizations themselves must expel any form of radicalism from among their ranks. It is not possible to exterminate the extremists of one civilization by the miracle arms of another.

Believing in God

Are we reaching the state of global belief in God? This question is being rightfully asked of me as a researcher of society’s ways. Would it not be necessary to think about the reasons for the clash of monotheistic religions – the Jewish, Christian and Muslim – during the last millennium and a half? Intolerance turned the three Judaistic religions against each other, against their brother religionists. We are trying to achieve exclusivity. We want the triumph of belief in one God the world over.

Would it not be better to study the religions of the Far East and to find the many ethical anchors they offer for the globalizing humanity of the 21st century?

It would be important to note how much more tolerance and understanding among humans between humans and nature are offered by the pantheistic religions that is, belief in many gods, to mankind, contrary to the monotheistic religions! In what ways can our concept of God and the concepts of atheists about humanity be reconciled? We are being looked at as some sort of antediluvial, prehistoric beings when we are trying to advance the idea of a future peaceful, brotherly cohabitation of the Judaic-Christian culture with that of Islam. This is an attitude assumed by people pursuing a career in politics and public life, especially if they are capable of reconciling it on the new confessional extremism.

Civilizations Learning about Each Other

Globalization also means for us – as we have been repeating this for more than a decade – that we must know more about cultures outside the Judeo-Christian cultural sphere. And this must also be valid for those on the outside. Our great grandfathers had to learn about each other, about the customs of various religions and ethnic groups, through the perspective of the national state. They had to work on developing a system of contacts among the different groups. Our fathers and we ourselves had to find – or should have found – a system of relations in a Europe-wide system within which we could govern ourselves and live side by side together with others. Living together also demanded the acceptance of common set of ethical norms. Our children will have to think in terms of the entire globe. They must find a consensus among billions of people who will grow up as Muslims, Buddhists, Confucians and believers in natural religions and their lifestyles, and principles. If such attempts failed, a series of conflicts will ensue. What would happen to the world, if we attempted to solve all problems with B-52-s or T-22-s only?

The Changing Methods of the Study of Society

We must admit that we need a change in the methods of learning of our “historical and social studies.” This statement is true for Buddhists, Confucians, Shintoists, as well as for Christians, Jews and Muslims. The world is in the process of globalization, whether some people wanted it to happen or not. People know more about the world and about other peoples of the globe today, through the mass use of television and travels, than they did fifty years ago. Yet there is a great deal more fundamental knowledge necessary for the realistic recognition and definition of the needs of individuals and local *communities*.

In the world of the large village – the world of the internet and mobile telephones – our children will be successful only if they grew up in a *country open to the world*, open to the entire globe in terms of economics, politics and cultural matters. We must have more chairs established at our universities, provide more information for our teachers about cultures existing outside Europe, than we have had up to now. Historical viewpoints concentrating on national history provided strong connecting materials in determining our society’s behaviour in the course of the 19th-20th centuries. (This was especially true during the occupation of our country by the Soviet Union.) But we must realize that *knowledge of the world will require a great deal more attention* than it is receiving today. We must train our students better – as well as ourselves – to acquire the ability to practice comparisons. We must realize that the basis for a universal view of the nation can only come from comparisons. If it were not

clear until now, it is becoming rapidly so; the history of the 21st century will be an age of conflict of economic interests, of the reproduction of methods of realizing interests, of folk customs, religious beliefs; now we will really write universal, or global history. The roots of this history go back to the previous centuries. Society is interested in all this. We must see to it that society should be interested in these roots. If we failed to do this, society will only see the hostile actions against it in our age. We should be thinking about these hostile actions right now, which is really the last moment.

We were thinking about the question, whether our politicians and social scientists had any suggestions for securing the peaceful coexistence of various civilizations? We have been speaking of a common state (homeland) until now, in which people of various genders, age-groups, social interest groups, ethnicity and religions lived in well-mixed neighbourhoods. We are now speaking of an entire globe as our common homeland, where we are living together in well-mixed groups ... where we are all responsible in common for the protection of the natural environment, for the realization of human rights, simply said, for each other ...

What can we say about our own country? We must provide for better knowledge of the *social sciences* in our schools. Within this subject more extensive study should be devoted to learning about the world's civilizations, replacing subjects dealing with the knowledge exclusively about the nation. After the globalization of production, the globalization of trade, of the protection of the environment, the study of humankind should also become global in scale. My craftsmen neighbors are telling me these things, not some educated intellectuals. We have been trying to explain to our colleagues since the early 1990's that the conflicts in Central Europe and the Balkans are mostly social, ethnic and religious in nature. They cannot be treated by arms, neither by Kalashnikovs, nor F-16s. Kosovo has provided ample proof of this in 1992.

We have little information about the other world, about other cultures. Our students and colleagues are surprised to learn that religious and ethnic differences are a great deal more complex in Western Asia than in Central Europe. For example, there are 3 million Tajiks in Tajikistan, while there are many more of them living in neighbouring Afghanistan. Of the Usbeks, 13 million live in Uzbekistan, 1 million in Afghanistan and 1.2 million in Tajikistan. There are an additional 1 million Turkmen in Afghanistan, and we have not yet mentioned the Pashtuns. People are asking us, what should they know about the Pashtuns? They are the ethnic majority of the multi-ethnic Afghanistan, but their majority live in Pakistan. Then we are asked if our sorrows (about our ethnic brothers and sisters living outside Hungary) are the only sorrows in the globalizing world? Should we not rethink in global terms our code of behaviour, issued in 1992 in several languages, for the minorities living in Eastern Europe?

Societal Roots of Terrorism

We are also being asked if we could rethink the role of social factors in global terms? The marvellous advancement of world capitalism which had reached its apex with the help of the latest industrial-technological revolution fills us all with admiration. But are we aware of the social impact provided by modern capitalism? Are we aware of the negative elements alongside the positive ones? Are we informed of the fact that as a consequence of the globalization of production and the markets, capital really producing goods, indeed moves freely around the globe; but as a consequence of following its natural attraction to profits, it creates vast world-wide slums? Alongside the cultural gap, there are now seemingly unbridgeable gaps in society, to a smaller extent within individual states, but even more frighteningly, among continents and entire cultures. Social conflicts emerge in the forms of religious-ethnic differences, in anti-white movements and in anti-world capitalism. Such social and cultural differences turn the masses that are left behind toward radicalism.

If the social differences within a community were too great, then the disadvantaged will sooner or later turn to violence. This is true in the case of communities, but also in families and in the community of national states. I for one explain the emergence of right-wing and left-wing dictatorship in the 20th century as a consequence of the fact that modern capitalism was incapable of handling huge social conflicts by political, that is, democratic means. The great masses of social outcasts wanted to use the coercive power of the state against the process of one-sided enrichment by the few. We have already seen that poverty in society leads to cultural backwardness, and its consequence is – social-national radicalism. We can observe the process in work in today's Hungary. Can the globe of the 21st century be dominated by such huge social inequalities? The comparison may be a little too extreme, but we must acknowledge the fact that something similar is taking place in our own country. People will reach for the means of terrorism and anarchism when they don't seem to be able to realize their dreams with opportunities available within the system. Sooner or later there will be a series of conflicts in the global village – as we are beginning to call our world – if people live at such a low cultural level in one or another part of the village as people exist today in Central Africa or in Asia. (We might add that we should be glad of the fact that China has been able to raise a leading strata during the last millennium that could handle its almost unimaginable poverty – through various political systems – in the 20th century.)

To be sure, there were rich men behind the terrorist attack of September 11, while its perpetrators had been groups who had risen to the level of Western Civilization, and even have lived in its areas. They saw rivals in the system of Western capitalism. But the belief system of these unfortunate suicides, in the spirit in which they had acted, is closely related to such cultural and social misery.

Why Are We Incapable of Providing Answers?

Our answer to the question posed above is that we are not prepared to provide answers.

Inadequate Knowledge of Society

We are unprepared to provide answers because our entire knowledge of society and our educational system are concentrating on local knowledge, on knowledge concerning national-cultural affairs. We are not willing to accept the fact that in this globalizing world knowledge about peoples of the globe must be present in the cultures of every small nation. Thank God, the natural scientists had succeeded in acquiring links of the chain of innovations and include them in the educational system of every national culture and scientific institutions. However, information about the peoples of the world is missing from the links of chain of innovation in the social sciences.

It is a paradox of the change of the political system in Hungary that it brought about retrogression in this process. The structure of the social sciences has been much more universal in character while the Soviet system had lasted. When there was an opening toward the cultures outside Europe and America in the 1970's, Hungarians developed Sinology, Islamic studies, and subjects of research had been extended to include South America and Africa. Paradoxically, this research structure had been narrowed down after the change of the political system for some deranged political reasons and, according to our survey, only a few positions, academic chairs and journals had been left for the purpose of studies of cultures outside Europe. (I have data to prove that the same situation exists in political and cultural diplomacy.)

Our nation is reliving its own historical bitterness and sorrows but, at the same time, loses its true view of the world. Yet, it is in the national interest for a people living in such a small territory as the Hungarians, to set its sight to a comparison of the cultures of the world.

However, we are incapable of providing answers because we are not prepared for doing so; our society is not in possession of knowledge about other societies. This is a situation that also exists in Europe as a whole, in the United States and, of course, in Hungary. Such knowledge is missing from education and from science. Therefore, knowledge about society is also missing from the thinking of political decision-makers. Natural scientists are familiar with the concept of critical mass. This means that there is such a small amount available from a certain matter that its influence may be neglected. At the end of the 20th century, knowledge about society has reached the state of "critical mass" – this is the most significant message of September 11 for science.

A "Society Based on Knowledge"?

As I stated before, the Day of Science is not a holyday for scientists, but it is a celebration of knowledge. We have been organizing this celebration for the last five years. UNESCO had decided only two weeks ago that it will also organize a Day of Science from next year on, the so-called World Day of Science, on each November 10th. This means that our thinking about science, about the relations between science and society, are going to be globalized. We must think about the meaning of a knowledge-based society that we speak so much about. What does it mean that the world is coming apart in a geographic sense, that Africa, Asia, the Near East, South America are all being left behind in general scientific knowledge? At the same time, the population is expanding exactly at these locations. There will soon be a demographic majority that will live without basic scientific knowledge. We must think about what sort of science we want in the 21st century. How much should the researcher depend upon the economic and technological interests of his age? And how much should he interfere with the fate of his society? Because it will not be possible to keep our opinions quietly to ourselves. And we must tell our employers, the providers of our finances, that we are capable to be representatives not only of the narrow interests of our guilds, but also of the local and universal interests of humanity; the interests of individuals and of humanity as a whole. We are operating our Academy, our universities, not only according to our guilds' interests, but also according to the interests of humanity as a whole.

It would be much better for everybody if we ourselves started a self-critical examination of our system of research, based on a national, and then on a world perspective, than wait until society (as it had happened so many times before) and politicians ran out of patience and set us in order by outsiders' means. Let us be capable ourselves to seek out the challenges of the 21st century and produce solutions in the shape of internal reforms of our research system.

We Should not only Provide a Diagnosis, but Should Offer a Cure!

I have written down several times in my diary that we must state the diagnosis. We must do so even if the patient or his relatives will dislike the verdict. I want to add now that we must also undertake the task of administering the cure. Let us not lose sight of this admonition. When we are searching for the interrelations between 21st century science and society, then the social sciences must learn the concepts of applied science from the natural sciences, and of all the systems of means that will justify this action. We simply must acknowledge the notion that in the new synthesis, in the process of the establishment of the knowledge-based society, scientists and researchers must take on active roles. For me, this is the meaning of the Day of Science.