

FERENC GLATZ

Europe's Future and the Future of National Minorities

I. The Union of the Future

Majority and Minority

How much chance exists for the survival of ethnic minorities in the Europe of the 21st century in *the form of communities of cultural units*? What kind of European Union are we going to have?

And what sort of technical-communication culture are we going to possess in the 21st century?

How will the territorial administrative system of the European Union be shaped and how will the contours of the current state-administrative organs within territorial administrations be organized and what sort of functions will they perform? These are questions that we raise for ourselves when thinking about the future course of European integration. The questions are there for sure, the answers are not.

The current state-administrations will definitely lose their omnipotence in the European Union since part of their power will be transferred to larger units of territorial administration (to the Union) in foreign affairs, military and financial matters. However, the national character of administration within the member states will persist in everyday affairs; after all, every banking transaction, the overall organization of armed forces, not to speak of local governments, will have to be conducted in the national language. Similarly, local schooling, trades, maternal registry, the organization of production will also continue to be performed in the national language.

Then come further questions: Will it be possible to speak of national minorities in today's terms in such a state of reduced sovereignty? After all, the concept of "minorities" can be perceived only in relation to the majority living in a given state. In the Union that will be a large territorial unit, everyone will be in a "minority!"

In any case, will the new administrative system strengthen or weaken the self-identification of the individual with the nation? If the answer is yes to the

first part of the question, will the integration strengthen the consciousness of national unity only for the majority nation or will that of the “minorities” also be strengthened by it? Speaking in concrete terms, will the *weakening* of the *administrative role of the Hungarian national state* in the European Union of the 21st century mean that the non-Hungarian nationalities living in that state will *not be* required to learn only the Hungarian language? For instance, will the framework of the Union be useful for Slovaks living in Hungary? Theoretically, it will be irrelevant for them that they, Slovaks, live in a Union-member Hungary or in a Union-member Slovakia.

Or are we going to be required to define the concepts of “minorities” and “majorities” in *regional* terms? Are we going to use these terms in the sense of *majority and minority languages* existing in a *given region*? Then, another question must be raised, namely, if Hungarians will comprise a majority in a Slovakian region, let us say in the *Ipolyság*, will the Hungarian language constitute the majority language there and the Slovak language will be that of the minority? These are questions that the future will have to answer...

In any case, we must begin thinking about the concepts of minorities and majorities.

Consciousness and Citizenship in the Union

We cannot avoid considering the following questions: “Will there emerge a concept of Union citizenship?” Will there be an identification of the individual with the Union? How will such a concept relate to a *European identity*? After all, the European Union – as a territorial administrative unit – will never be identical with the concept of Europe as a geographical or cultural area. In other words, a European identity will not necessarily be the same as a *European Union identity*. How will a Union identity relate to the individual’s identification with citizenship in a state or other – *regional or other territorial community – identification*? And how will all this relate to the identification of the individual as a citizen and as a member of a nation? The latter of this does not necessarily mean identification with a unit of territorial administration! After all, members of a nation may live in several areas in separate groups (even in geographically distant regions). The way Hungarians live in Transylvania, in the Székely lands, far from Hungary’s borders and equally far from their co-nationals living in Kolozsvár located in the centre of Transylvania itself. Not to speak of those Hungarians who live in diasporas disseminated, from America to various other states in the world. The same can be said of the Poles or of the latter live 200 kilometres distant from the main Slovak groups in southern Hungary. (It has been long known that a significant group of ethnic Slovaks has been living in that area since the 18th century who are – at least in my mind – members of the Slovak nation living in the territory of the Hungarian state.)

Free Movement, Integration, Identity

There is already a common currency, the Euro, and common policies have also been introduced, such as in *agriculture and environmental protection*. Common policies regulating *transportation* will certainly be established and it is also certain that common *security* practices and *jurisprudence*, as well as regulations in areas of *business life*, will emerge. These will all be significant steps toward the integration of territorial administration. However, we are unable to discover the “human dimensions” of the Union’s framework. Hardly any thought is given to the *freedom of human migrations*. (We do not like to discuss this issue since it might conflict with the interests of the labour market of national states.) I consider it unthinkable to introduce any sort of restriction on the movement of labour within the European Union. In fact, one of the advantages – if not the greatest – of the Union, in contrast to those of the national states, is the size of the market; this includes free movement of products and expertise on a large scale.

If a European-scale migration emerges, the consequences will be the spread of diverse ethnic-national groups scattered all over the Union. *People will become more citizens of Europe and less citizens of the nation states*. It is likely that Hungarians will be scattered all over the member states of the Union, living on territories of France, Germany, Holland, and so on. After a while there will be small ethnic communities of Hungarians in these lands, the same way as Turkish and Croatian groups are formed today or have been formed during the last 30 years. The future citizens of the Union will chose a country *according to whether in that specific locality purchasing power for their abilities or their expertise exists*. They will probably pay their taxes in that area as well. They will learn local languages and assimilate at least partly local customs and habits. At the same time, they may also retain their original national language and part of their customs.

Whose minorities will such communities be? They will be citizens of the Union and, at the same time, also Hungarian minorities of the Union. The same process will happen to the Hungarians of Slovakia; they will simply be “Hungarians” living within the Union. Their citizenship will remain Slovak, and they will also be European Union citizens. It is possible that their affinities as citizens of the Union will increase at the expense of the Slovak one. The key question is, of course, “will there be a Union citizenship?” And if there is a Union currency – as indeed there is – will there be a *Union income tax*? In other words, the national states (for example the Slovak state) shall not contribute a certain amount of money to maintain the administration of the Union, however citizens living in the Union shall pay their taxes directly to the Union? Union citizenship also means that various civil societies and autonomies will consider themselves minorities not in relation to the Slovak state but in relation to the inhabitants of neighboring regions, the former majority populations, if their majority consists of Slovaks.

The “national-ethnic autonomy” will then accommodate itself to the *autonomies of the various other identities*. These identities will exist and function as long as the respective communities have a need for a separate consciousness of these groups. In any case, *the administrative systems of the Union will have to consider a great many variations on this concept and must be prepared for the possibility that any solution will provide new directions for the organization of the Union’s communities*. These communities will modify by their very existence the frameworks of territorial administrations.

Industrial-Technological Development, Plurality of Identities and Self-Government

Let us consider another factor, namely, the industrial-technological development of the 21st century. When we discuss the expected industrial-technological development of the 21st century, we must first pose a question; “What sort of changes can be expected in the culture of human communications by the revolution in world computer chips?” I am convinced that the new culture of communications will lead to the emergence of a *new type of individualism*. The mass use of television, the emerging new internet-culture whose real impact cannot yet be foreseen, electronic mailing service, the fact that everyone’s desk at home will provide a view on the cultures of the world, the all-conquering cellular telephone, are all pointing to such a direction. But the “new individualism” – carrying with it certain dangers – will, hopefully, not lead to the isolation of the individual, to his separation from others, but to the emergence of a new consciousness of community which will be based on the individual’s choice. Therefore, individualism will not mean isolation, but that *people will select their community relations and, alongside with it, their identity on an individual basis* that is, in a variety of ways. It means that the individual will experience his sense of identity more deliberately. For instance, alongside his identity as a European citizen (that will take first place), the ethnic-national-, age-, gender-, and ideological identifications will be acting as forces for the cohesion of respective groups. The consciousness of citizenship will continue to survive, but on a different level; it will probably survive as a community of taxpayers.

Autonomies and Civil Associations

My forecast about the growth of the impact of civil associations in the 21st century is based on the notion of the strengthening of the new type of individualism. Civil associations are the self-management organs of citizens whose importance is recognized by the community, the state, or the Union. If the

Union will consider the survival of a variety of ethnic and national groups important, then it will finance from the common budget groups dedicated to serving the maintenance of ethnic-national consciousness of the citizens. However, it can also happen that the Union would order the surviving national states to finance the creation and maintenance of their respective ethnic-national autonomous administrations.

The new individualism, this new *social energy*, is many-sided – possibly it will constitute a new type of self-identification of the individual, and it will create a set of new associations, new autonomies. The process may become a foundation for the strengthening or establishment of new civil associations.

According to our definition, the very existence of civil associations that the community recognizes calls for institutions of certain functions that do not necessarily have to be integrated into the framework of state- or sector administration. In such a case the state, or the European Union, ensures support for the citizens, the taxpayers – from the budget – to freely form under the condition that they perform a certain function within the community. There are certain tasks that cannot be performed by the state or sector administrations. Through such actions the weight of the executive power is reduced and the ratio of the freely formed associations of citizens is increased. (For this process to succeed there is the associations need for the emergence of a new type of citizenry.)

I consider *various ethnic autonomies to correspond to such civil associations*. The nation-state or the European Union will recognize that the masses of citizens living on its territory will establish various kinds of autonomies organized in several ways (including ethnic autonomies). Their rights will be enacted into laws and, at the same time, they will be regulated or delimited in the areas of their competence. The regulations will include funds derived from the budget – that is, from the common purse – for the performance of functions to benefit the respective association. An *autonomous self-government for ethnic minorities could be one form of a civil association in the 21st century*. And since the desire of the citizens for the freedom of association continues to increase – including organizations based on ethnic identities –, the rise and strengthening of civil associations will contribute to the increasing demand for the establishment of autonomous ethnic self-governments.

Therefore, my conclusion is that in the coming decades the new industrial-technical revolution *will strengthen the recognition of self-realization and the citizens' need for the free exercise of these self-realizations and identities*. All this points to the fact that the consciousness of ethnic identities and autonomies, organized on ethnic foundations, is going to undergo unforeseen changes in the future.

II. Europe and its Nations in the 21st Century

I intended to illustrate — with my introductory questions and attempts at providing some partial answers — how much the future of the autonomous national-ethnic self governments will depend on the territorial administrative system of the continent and on the impact of the industrial-technological revolution. I would now like to describe some working hypotheses for consideration in today's discussions. The aim is to have our *plans contrasted by realities*.

1. Europe is a Continent of Ethnic Diversity

I believe that the future Europe will be a continent of ethnic diversity. More exactly, it will be a place where the current ethnic varieties will continue to exist.

National cultures will be freely renewed, or will equally freely disappear. The Union must ensure the *possibility* for this social-cultural evolution.

One of the unique characteristics of Europe has been the fact that two dozen national cultures have existed and continue to exist on its territories, each equipped with its own literature and system of customs embedded in its own institutions. My surmise is that the enlargement of the Union *will end the possibility of the suppression of ethnic-national differences or, conversely, their support by means of government*. In other words, ethnic-national identities may be spontaneously strengthened or weakened. One of the fundamental characteristics of the Union could be that *the exclusive rule of the majority nation in the administration will come to an end* and it will not be able to oppress the national minorities with the power of the state (including the power of the administration of regions). My other hunch is that national differences *will not lead to wars*. It will be necessary to establish *unified principles of policies for the ethnic groups* living on the territories of the Union. For the realization of this principle I consider it to be necessary that the European Union, as well as lower levels of administration, leave the decision up to individuals to decide on their own the ethnic-national identities.

2. About the Nature of National Identity, its Weakening and Strengthening

National identity is a phenomenon that is cultural-social in nature. It is manifest in two areas of everyday life, namely, *in a national language and a system of customs*.

A citizen considers his national identity important in certain periods of his life and he places it before other – social, ideological, gender, and even family – identities. In other periods of his life this feeling of community-creating becomes weaker. It is also natural that the process should be different in each individual

case; there are some people who consider national identity unimportant throughout their lifespan, regardless of their use of a given mother tongue and the acceptance of the set of rules of their community's customs.

Therefore, the notion of belonging to a nation is a matter of the individual's conviction and a subjective feeling. *Citizenship, even blood relations and age, however, are administrative in nature, "objective," and they are independent of the individual's choice. Belonging to a nation is simply a matter of declaration, that is subjective.* An individual may change his national identity. Tendencies that restrict such changes are "excluding," and have no place in the new Europe. *Ethnic diversity and exclusion are contradictory principles.* (Of course, one may leave the administrative framework of citizenship on a voluntary basis and we even consider the Europe of the 21st century to become the community of individuals possessing multiple citizenships.)

Let us now take a closer look at two areas of national identity, namely, language and the systems of customs.

3. About Language Cultures in the 21st Century

There will probably be three levels of languages in the Europe of the 21st century; one will be a world-language (probably English), the languages of respective states (as long as state administrations will continue to exist, – perhaps even in centuries-long perspective – these languages will survive) and the mother tongue. The world-language, the *lingua franca*, will probably be English. In addition, there will continue to exist regional *lingua francas* acquiring regional "rank" from one of the state languages. (For instance, in the Near East this will probably be Arabic, in the Far East Japanese or Chinese, and their various dialects. In Central Europe, it will probably be German, in the former French colonies in Africa French, in Eastern Europe Russian and so on.) This will probably be also the case in several occupations in which there may develop "professional languages of transmission" besides English.

The question is: *will the citizen of the 21st century's Europe be able to acquire knowledge of 2-3 languages?* In other words, will he be able to learn, besides his mother tongue, the language of the state that will not be necessarily the same? And in addition will he learn another world language as a *lingua franca* and also acquire a regional language or a language of his trade? Will the man of the 21st century be able to operate jurisprudence, transportation and education by using several languages (approved officially by the respective states)? Would it be worth his energy to acquire so many languages simply in order to facilitate everyday communications easier? In other words, would he be willing to spend his intellectual abilities and resources on this endeavour instead of using them for developing other abilities?

Cultures of Customs in the 21st Century

Another area in the everyday life of ethnic-national communities concerns the culture of customs. We understand under this term the sum of food consumption, clothing and customs of behaviour. Today one can observe the use of many more variations in the system of customs and habits than before. Modes of conduct may even divert from ethnic-national lines. There may be citizens in Europe who speak Hungarian as their mother tongue, but will follow French, Spanish, German, Slovak, or Romanian customs in styles of clothing, behaviour, or even in traditions of celebrating holidays. And this will be quite all right.

The strongest influences exerted on the system of habits within a culture are climate and modes of conduct to overcome climatic challenges, such as *clothing, consumption of food, an individual's position in production, and traditions of feelings*.

Modernization in the twentieth century, globalization, free movement, the discovery of ever newer cultures, the taking over of certain elements from such new cultures and the new individualism will generally speaking not lead to the disappearance of the diversity of culture-systems. The citizen will have the chance to select his own system of culture more freely than it is the case today. Yet, his possibilities will always be curtailed to some extent by the actual climate and the natural environment, also general conditions set by the majority, or even by the majority in society and the requirements of technology. After all, the system of habits of people living near the North Pole, their ways of constructing housing or their behaviour, their food culture, will always be different than, let us say, the behaviour of people living near the Equator, just as the temper of southern peoples, whose behaviour is closely related to opportunities provided by the climate, will always be different from the behaviour of northern populations.

The Use and Cultivation of the Language of the State

The framework for the survival of ethnic-national minorities, as we indicated above, rests on the continued use of the national language and the system of habits. The use of language and, less importantly, everyday communications and relationships, are kept alive, in daily contacts since their survival depends on their use. The maintenance and further development of the language and system of habits is an appendage of the cultural institutions in daily life. Among these institutions, however, *family relations* and customs are entirely of a private matter. If the state prevents the improvement of the language of a minority, the citizens belonging to this minority experience an emotional confrontation with their own administrative system, and will be forced to consider that their children will become handicapped compared to their peers, if they cannot acquire

both languages. They also have to consider learning a third language, the regional or the world-wide *lingua franca*. For 200 years – since we have been living under modern administrative systems in Europe – the ever renewed political controversies have revolved around the use of the mother tongue in dealing with administration; over the language of education, of administration of trades and professions. It is well known to researchers that the survival of minorities in the 19th-20th centuries depended on their right to use their language in dealing with administrative offices.

The use of the mother tongue is a human right, and it is not only individual persons, but also language - and national communities that are its subjects. It is a collective right. Freedom of opportunity must be ensured for the individual regardless of birth, or the place of one's position in production (society), but also in terms of his right to use the mother tongue. This is a fundamental principle of our liberalism. We are not speaking only of an individual's freedom to use his mother tongue, but also of his possibility to *improve it*. It is at this point that the use of the mother tongue becomes a collective right. After all, the state must ensure education in the mother tongue for a community (a collective), in order to enable its members to use the television, and enjoy literary institutions. The question is; to what extent will the European state of the 21st century ensure the exercise of this collective right?

Bicameral Parliaments and the Plurality of Identities

We cannot neglect the issue for the political representation of minorities. We are speaking especially and particularly of the realization of the principle of self-government. It is necessary for the preservation of minority existence to be able to influence the apparatus of the state. This can be done in the form of *street demonstrations* or even in coercive actions as had happened in Yugoslavia between 1990 and 1999, or by using *parliamentary means* as in Romania and Slovakia. I naturally support the principle of parliamentary representation for minorities.

However, for the latter it is necessary to accept a representative system based on a bicameral legislature. In one of the chambers, let us say, in the lower house, representatives are elected on the basis of their party affiliations and in the other the representatives elected by *civil associations* will participate. (This could be called the senate.) Representatives of civil societies may be chosen by local ethnic groups, religious associations, educational-, scientific-, cultural-institutions, trade unions and other associations – even based on gender affinities. There is no danger of smuggling the old feudal privileges based on birth back into the system, as it is invoked by my friends who consider themselves liberals. The second chamber would be designed to ensure the extension of the

saintly principle of liberalism, namely, the freedom of the individual for self-realization and the emergence of plural identity. We are talking here about representatives elected by the “people”! This type of representation will provide opportunities for the citizens to express and live their loyalties beyond party sympathies.

Such a bicameral representative system may be created on both the *state* and *even village* levels. During the 1980's I only surmised that liberal practices of representation must finally arrive at the principle of bicameral legislation. In 1999, however, while observing the confrontation of European political systems with the emergence of social, ethnic, and other (religious, “green” etc.) orientations, it had become my conviction that, without the realization of these factors, the European parliamentary system will once again enter a dead end. (As it failed after 1930, at the time of the great upsurge of social and ethnic identities. And then came Fascism and Communism...)

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This is the way the *liberal traditions of Europe* are connected in my thinking with the new individualism, engendered by *the industrial-technological revolution, ethnic self-government* and the freedom of expression for the politics of the 21st century. This is also the way in which my way of thinking connects the cause of European ethnic minorities with democracy, with the principles of popular representation, and with the modern ethics of citizenship. This is also the way in which the future-oriented thinking and behaviour of European citizens is connected to the research of minority life. I consider the development of the latter important because it may strengthen a form of self-identification of the new type of European citizenship and may also support the proud framework of a new civil existence.