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Interests and Values:
The Spirit of Venture in a Time of Change

Slovak Philosophical Studies, II

edited by
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Introduction

George F. McLean

Immediately after the fateful November of 1989 Slovak philosophers, along with other teams in Central and Eastern Europe, undertook a search of their tradition in order to find the values upon which their new society could be built for the 21st century. In the volume, *Language, Values and the Slovak Nation*, they carefully reexamined the development of the Slovak identity before and after 1919 and then reviewed the persistence and variability of values in the Slovak culture.

After that work of retrospection and rediscovery of the resources of the tradition they proposed a prospective study. This was taken up as well by the other teams under the general theme "Building Democratic Societies: Values and Rights". The present volume is the Slovak contribution to this project. It focuses appropriate on the intersection of the earlier concerns for physical development with the present deepening concerns for cultural values, tradition and human meaning.

The times may be analogous to the Renaissance when multiple new avenues were opening before the human spirit. The pessimist saw this as a threatening situation in which the older maps were no longer adequate for clarifying the path of life; the optimist looked upon it as a wondrous opportunity for human development and growth.

Today Slovakia and Central Europe — and in a real sense the world as a whole — are at a similar point of change from national to global horizons, from industry to communication, and from totalitarian ideologies to new and creative social freedom. Like a plane which has taken flight, stability can be achieved not by remaining static and mobile, but only through a dynamic forward thrust. In human terms this means a spirit of venture in the midst of newly emerging uncertainties.

This work is carried out jointly by the Institute of Philosophy and the Institute of Social Forecasting, both of the Slovak Academy of Science. Its challenge is to face the basic reality of social change which inevitably must characterize life after the November Revolution and to integrate the new interests which emerge from this context. This requires investigating how the deeper heritage of values can be understood as a dynamic principles which can shape the chaos of often conflicting interests into a dynamic human venture.

The work has four parts. The first treats the general parameter of interests and values in a time of change; the other three study this in general detail at the level of economy, nation and environment.

Part I: Interests and Values in a Time of Change. Chapter I by Jana Gasparikova, "The Nature of Interests: Beyond Conflicts, towards the Organization of a New Socio-economic System," launches the study by analyzing the notion of interest in its many understanding and dimensions. It identifies the complexity of the human spirit and its creative response to a complex universe — especially at the economic and political level. This points toward the new agenda of civil society and cultural globalization, which however may need to be the object of another study.

Chapter II by Tibor Pichler "Continuity and Change: the Role of Tradition" goes back to resume the history of human development. However he sees present changes toward a democratic future in a more disjunctive light, fearing the looking back might suggest models which would be less democratic. Hence, he would suggest laying out formal democratic principles and fulling them in from new experience. But whence will these principles emerge and is it too hopeful to think that

at long last our practice will be correct? If so then rather than leaving the past behind it may be important to look there for levels of meaning which might be transformed and transformative.

This can be found in Chapter III by Jozef Pauer, "Culture and Human Rights: Empirical Notes with a Metaphysical Conclusion," who shifts the horizon from a longitudinal process through time to a vertical search for the sources of meaning. This takes one beyond the level of multiple and changing interests of both individual and community to that of ultimate meaning and concern where persons' causes find their sacred foundations and rights find their inviolable character. This is viewed dynamically in Chapter XII which sees values in terms of the human venture and realization.

Part II: Economic Interests and Values takes up these themes at the economic level with special regard to the issue of privatization. Chapter IV by Jana Gasparikova, "The Problems of Management Linked with the Privatization Process and Conflicts of Interests," carries her description of interests in Chapter I to the economic order where it is expressed in competition.

Chapter V by Jaroslav Nemeč, "Interests Which Have Influenced the Privatization Process in the Slovak Republic," describes the various methods of privatization which have been proposed and or tricked during the last decades. Chapter VI by Danes Brzica relates these to the interests and competencies of the many groups involved in the privatization process.

Chapter VII by Dagmar Smreková, "The Place of Ethics in the Business World," asks a surprising question, namely, how is it that as scientific reason advances, it does not substitute a rational calculation of interests for values, ethics and morals in the economic order. By analyzing the development of a free, as opposed to a command economy he identifies these as the distinctive dimensions upon which the humane quality of life depends. This connects to the insights of Chapter III by Joseph Pauer.

Part III. National Identity and Culture. turns to the issue of national identity which has emerged as a point of special difficulty with the new independence of the peoples of the region after the long Marxist effort at international homogenization.

Chapter VIII by Karol Kollár, "Nation and Transformation," distinguishes two approaches to the modern nation. The first treats the notion of nature very critically as compromising modern rationalism; the other considers it a natural historical development of a people living through time and facing together shared challenges and opportunities.

Chapter IX by Tatiana Sedová, "Beyond Rationality," takes the first attitude to the extreme, seeing in nation only a kind of social pathology that essentially is interiorly defensive and externally aggressive toward the other, whether minorities or other nations. This typically modern inability of liberal thought to take account of the cultural aspirations of peoples is the individualist mirror image of the other cold war ideology. The vestiges of both now remain only as impediments to grappling with the problems of cultural values and the identities of peoples central to redevelopment for the new millenium. These can be disregarded only at the cost of abandoning the responsibilities of philosophy to provide the reflection needed in and for human progress. This must consist not in rationalist achievements but in the proper and creative exercise of human freedom.

Chapter X by Eco Gál, "Difference, Identity and Politics," does recognize the problem of identity, but seems ambiguous as regards the response. Should it be to develop an identityless society of amorphous individuals insulated by their rights, or could diversity be a source not of conflict but of mutuality?

Chapter XI by Jana Balázová, "The Ambiguity of Nationalism," follows this latter possibility. She develops the history and notion of nation and spells out its positive characteristics. Then, noting its limitations and effects, she looks to a shift toward the notion of citizen as giving more attention to the individual.

Chapter XII by František Novosád, "Towards a Culture of Uncertainty and Venture," goes further and in a surprising manner. He takes up the notion of ideology. He recognizes that this can be dangerous in supposing greater certainty than is available. Yet he points out how, especially in a time of change, this provides a goal and opens means and possibilities of transformation and progress. In the end, he opts, in a somewhat rationalist manner, for what is substantive, rationally identifiable and able to be expressed articulately. Nevertheless, he recognizes that in a time of great change we must live with uncertainty and that life may best be grasped as venture. In these, less rationalist, terms ideology may be a less helpful than utopia. Moreover, this, in turn, needs to be deabsolutized into values in search of realization, this may be the most important suggestion of the overall work.

Part IV. Environmental Interests and Social Transformation. extends the horizons of the work beyond economic systems and the political category of nation to concern for the environment.

Chapter XIII by Eva Smolková "Environmental Thinking and Social Transformation" provides not only a history of the environmental movement in Slovakia, but situates this within the process of democratization. In these terms something impressive emerges. Where some would hear that increased attention to the environment might shift attention from humans to nature in a type of zero sum game, Professor Smolková sees a different effect whereby democratization achieves its true nature as a process not of ideas, but of people.

Chapter XIV by Tatiana Kluvánková, "Environmental Decision Making in the Slovak Republic," follows this movement through the development of national legislation for the regulation of environmentally significant actions pointing to the need to make this not only economically feasible but holistically sound.

Chapter XV by Zuzana Paloviová "Environmental Ethics: Its Problem and Alternatives" provides a very insightful analysis of the development of a specific ethics for environmental problems. This opens issues regarding universal principles and rights in this field and whether these should be extended to animals. She shows effectively the limitations of attempts to articulate universals and rights in this field as too brittle to take account of the complex diversity and evolving character of reality. Her prescription: to move from an ontological to an epistemological basis, like much of philosophy, may be most effective in what it affirms, rather than in what it denies. Certainly she makes a great contribution in suggesting the need to go beyond rationalism to a new epistemological level. Though not mentioned this may well be the aesthetic level where harmony is prized not only between physical nature and humane, but between various modes of human understanding. Further, the move beyond ontology might be promising if it were not an abandonment of the physical reality and of humanity, but a deeper metaphysical understanding of both. They need to be understood not as opposed, but as complementary expressions of the divine unity which creates all out of love and draws all together by the attraction of its goodness.

Together these chapters provide special insight into the struggle of the people of Slovakia to build their nation anew. The issues are daunting, but so is the opportunity. This is the moment to surpass attitudes of conflict and to develop the vision needed to relate in a positive manner the multiple new forces and aspirations. This is both the task and the richness of the present volume, as is suggested by its title: *Interests and Values: The Spirit of Venture in a Time of Change.*

Chapter I
The Nature of Interests:
Beyond Conflict, Towards the Organization of
a New Socioeconomic System

Jana Gasparikova

In building new democratic societies not only is the formation of a new political system important, but also the organization of a new socio-economic system. Such organization results in different socio-economic changes on different levels, both macro and micro.

The formation of a new socio-economic system depends on complex system changes in society and economy: restructuring the entire economy; promoting the development of new economic sectors, for instance, the service sector; restructuring the financial and banking sector; economic autonomy for enterprises; a new position of the state; development of small and medium-sized enterprises; the privatization process; conversion of heavy industry, new monetary policy, etc.

Overall, the general changes in the economic system in Slovakia were directed towards the system changes which could be achieved in the shortest period of time. The goal was a rapid change of the economic system, the formation of a macro-economic equilibrium, and the realization of a new economic environment resulting in the change of behavior of economic agents and consequently in a radical transformation of macro-economic efficiency and effectivity.

The general change in the economy consequently was connected with a change of the economic order. This includes a more philosophical definition of the economic system based on the economic behavior of individuals. This is dictated by their will and the endeavor to maintain democratic rules and principles, and consequently ethical canons, in their economic activity. In democratic societies this economic order is understood not only as an instrument for the production and distribution of goods and services, but much more extensively. It represents an economic environment characterized not only by the functioning of the economic system, but also by a broad scale of democratic values accepted by real economic agents in their economic activities. This economic order is obligatory for people, not only in their economic behavior as economic consumers and producers, but for all members of society during different kind of activities which promote this economic order. This theoretical conclusion seems to be very simple, but it is in direct contradiction with the reality of the economic and political activities of economic agents.¹

¹ 1. The theoretical concept of democracy regards people as citizens. The democratic concept of freedom is based on the self-determination of citizens resting on their individual and collective decisions: this is a self-determination of citizens by which they take part as political equals in making proposals for democratic laws and rules according which all members of society live together as citizens. The theoretical concept of economy in, for instance, classical and neoclassical economic theory understands people as consumers of goods and services. Each aspect (stressing the democratic or the economic point of view) expresses only one special social aspect. The freedom gained in the economic concept is predominantly a freedom of choice in the market, of consumers to choose different goods and services, of businessmen to compete among themselves offering different services and goods and gaining sources of production. See R.A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (Prague: Victoria Publishing, 1989), 293-294.

The economic order is connected with economic freedom as well. The real dimension of economic freedom as freedom of choice and of market concerns a variety of economic and political consequences and motives, hidden within different economic activities.

Description and explanation of these hidden societal forces and the consequences of the economic and political behavior of members of the new democratic society could enable one to see more deeply and precisely the entire transition process in Slovakia and to understand attempts to form a new economic order as a nearly utopian activity, because behind all these rapid changes are political and economic interests which prevent the establishment of the real economic order in Slovakia. Such difficulties pertain not only to Slovakia, but are experienced also in other countries which are building new democratic societies in Central and Eastern Europe. Similar difficulties can be observed in countries with developed democracies as well.

The radical consequences resulting from the economic situation in Slovakia make manifest the link between the economic and political behaviors of members of society during the formation of the socio-economic system: its real progress as well as its simultaneous deviation from the imagined vision of a new ideal economic order.

In order to understand the recently total socio-economic transformation of society in Slovakia and its true progress it is necessary to understand and describe not only the general change of the socioeconomic system, but also the change in different kinds of policies such as privatization policy, environmental, scientific and technological, etc., which realize the real interests involved in the actual social changes.

Also very important, but more difficult to observe, is not only the description of individual, partial socio-economic changes which are realized in different kinds of policies under the influence of different decision making processes, realized by various state or governmental institutions, ministries or parliament. More difficult to perceive are how all these decisions are motivated. The character of the decision making process and its application to different kinds of policies are especially important and the answer to questions linked with this issue reveals hidden social forces on different kinds of policies, i.e., different kinds of interests.²

The result of the identification of interests is a picture of the development of different kinds of policies. This enables an understanding of the real character of these policies as the result of special social forces, hidden under the surface of socio-economic processes. At first these are unseen, but very much determine the real socio-economic processes of different policies.

Real policies (social, privatization, environmental) are managed and influenced by political and economic interests, which are special socio-economic phenomena that form the social and

Especially recently it is necessary to combine both these two levels, that is, to see citizens not only as consumers, but also as the real founders of a new economic and democratic order. This means using economic freedom with all the ethical canons which result in observing democratic values during their economic activities.

The problems of definition of the new economic order are found also in developed countries. Hence, one should not be surprised that the problems of a new economic order are much more complicated in the countries of Central Europe where the possibilities of change are influenced by side effects accompanying the transition of the entire socio-economic system, for during this transition period economic problems are closely linked with political problems.

This strong political influence on the entire transition process and its consequences has great impact on the general and partial results of socio-economic changes on different levels (macro-economic level and micro economic level) and on economic freedom.

² *System of Interest Representation in Poland*, ed. Jerzy Hausner (Cracow: Cracow Academy of Economics, 1991).

economic relations with regard to different kinds of social or economic policies (relations of cooperation, subordination, etc.). Interests reflect also relations among different groups with institutional and legislative power (the way rules and norms resulting from governmental or ministerial rules or laws are institutionally accepted). This determines the legislative status of these regulations if their content is a mixture of different concepts influenced by a variety of interest groups. Hence, it is necessary to ask what kind of interests they represent and reflect from the point of view of economic or political power, and in this case it is very important to identify the interests involved.

To find the general and adequate definition of interests is not easy. We can distinguish for instance a philosophical and a socio-logical definition of interests. The philosophical definition of interests is linked with the definition of goals, requirements (needs) and realizations of a certain social, economic and political situation. Interests are understood as incentives realizing different situations, different requirements (needs) at the very center of the activity of an individual or a group. If these requirements (needs) are connected with consequent interests, they are transformed into certain goal-oriented behavior and in most cases behavior which bears promise of success in seeking a goal.

In this sense interests could be understood as requirements (needs) of consciously or subconsciously intended behavior directed towards a specific subject, while individual requirements (needs) are transformed into requirements (needs) identical with those of the social group. Especially, the differentiation between individual needs and group needs tends to differentiate subjective and objective interests.

An issue concerning the role of subjective (private) interests and their relation to objective (societal) interests is the need to organize a society in a way that uses the passion of a people for building the commonwealth and vice versa (according, for instance, to R. Dahrendorf's social theory). It is not possible to find a definite answer on this question, and the history of different kinds of societies (from totalitarian to democratic ones) shows how difficult it is to find a real equilibrium in clusters of interests for the real commonwealth of all members of different societies in the 20th century.

On the other hand, problems of interests concern needs. In this way we speak about such needs as self-actualization³ which is transformed into economic influence and power in different social groups, especially during this transition period in Slovakia. "In this way interests are the particular social and economic outcomes held to benefit a particular person or group. Such interests may be those recognized and pursued by the person or group, or they may be identified by others, including social scientists, as underlying or 'objective', unrecognized by the persons concerned."⁴

In socio-logical terms it is possible to define the interests of members of society (individual, group or class interests) as reflecting of social conditions resulting from the social position of people and how those in a particular social position form their social relations. The social influence resulting from a specific social position is very closely linked with the economic influence and

³ Needs are the basic requirements necessary to sustain human life. They are defined differently according to usage: Maslow (1954) suggested a hierarchy of needs leading from the basic physiological needs for food, safety and shelter to the psychological needs of belonging, approval, love and finally the need for self-actualization. Some other socio-logists speak about basic and felt needs. See D. Jerry and J. Jarry, *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 417-418. This self-actualization is connected with the realization of one's personal potential with all of a person's abilities.

⁴ Jerry and Jarry, *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, 321.

economic power resulting from this same social position as well, which is linked with problems of economic interests.

If we concentrate on the definition of economic interests these are objective interests, determined by motives reflecting ownership relations, incentives for work and labor in order to form, develop and satisfy the material conditions of society, class, social group or individual. They express the link between the social position of a people in a system of national production and their material demands. "The economic relations of a given society exhibit themselves predominantly as interests."⁵

A union among different forms of economic interests could aim at a certain harmonization of society that does not yet exist in reality.⁶ Economic interests express the direction and orientation of economic agents towards real goals in their economic activity. The fundamental economic interests are individual interests (interests of individuals, individual households, private enterprises), group interests (interests of groups of employees in different firms, or corporations, etc.) and social interests (public and state interests, for instance, those concerning the growth of labor productivity, protection of the environment, etc.) We will be interested in group interests motivated by economic influence and power, because the determination of the process of economic and political behavior helps especially in approaching the definition of interests which are at the center of our research.⁷

Why do we speak about different kind of policies during the transition period? In the first place because these policies point out different goals for the economic activities of subjects with the wanted and unwanted effects which accompany the economic behavior of agents toward reaching these goals. In the realization of these interests the question of interest groups comes to the foreground.

The realization of the interests of definite social interest groups depends on the system of power. Only by forming an appropriate mechanism for articulating interests can a social group ensure that its aspirations are taken into account. The structure and character of the system of power determines which mechanisms are effective for the articulation of interests. The interrelation between group interests and the power structure is not only based on the responsiveness of the socio-economic system based on changing relations among groups, but the system of power influences the interplay of group interests, because the relationship between power and the expression of interests is reciprocal.

By activating certain mechanisms of articulation the system of power influences these interests. Hence, this topic concerns relations between interest groups and power elites and how some interest groups are established as power elites in enterprises and organizations in order strongly to defend and promote their own interests. The issue of political power and power elites which also influences the type of economic power is very important in Slovakia, where it strongly influences the progress of transformation with regard to different kinds of policies.

The development of contemporary systems of interest representation undoubtedly is linked with the increase of the number of functions performed by the state and its intervention in public life, leading to an institutionalization of the representation of interests and of conflicts of interests.

⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Writings*, vol. 18 (NPL, 1966), 385.

⁶ *Dictionary of Political Economy* (Prague, 1982), 340.

⁷ Interests are not only a socio-economic phenomena, but socio-psychological as well, because they produce inner reactions on what is felt as one's interests as well as outer reactions. The basis for socio-psychological definitions are psychological definitions of interests as the basic motivations and orientations of a subject.

With regard to the influence of the state and its intervention we can distinguish several social and economic agents that are bearers of interests:

- a) social groups and individuals
- b) various types of organizations articulating different interests
- c) the state and its authorities (especially among these interest groups are power elites which influence the real development of different kinds of policies).

The problem of interest representation brings to the foreground of the question of expectations, understood from the point of view of fulfilling different social roles or social positions. The weakness and non adequacy of interest representation is understood as the continuous structural combination of the passive expectations of many people and their anarchic defensive behavior. This is determined by the previous impact of the socialist manner of state intervention and production based on family and friendship connections which influenced the economic behavior of people.⁸

In the former period a question of political membership (mostly membership in communist party) was very important and personally helpful. This enforced individual and group interests inasmuch as not being a member of the Communist Party represented a great loss of personal social position for individuals. The importance of political membership is still observable. (It is still necessary to take into consideration the motivation of the political behavior of individual parliamentary members, recent political groups, etc.)

The connections based on family and friendship contacts formed a certain economic platform, which is influential even today. Though, on the one hand, this economic activity based on family and friendship contacts and accompanied by adequate interests eroded the socialist system, on the other hand, this type of contact formed a system of social relations influencing recent society and consequently the new democratic and economic order.

These problems of interests constitute a very varied and diversified field of problems. The papers here will concentrate on the different understandings of interests especially in the field of management and in privatization policy.

The above definition of interests, based namely on philosophical and socio-logical considerations, helps us to understand the fundamental concepts which form the theoretical concept of interests: social position, social needs, self actualization and problems of power and economic influence. All these theoretical notions give prominence to economic interests. Especially these economic interests, when transformed into problems of power, are the real indices of progress in this transformation period in Slovakia and the Czech Republic and its different economic policies (interests modifying the privatization process, the management of large enterprises, etc.). The topic of interests reveals also another very important problem, namely, that of motivation resulting in the change of new economic systems and how different types of social

⁸ As to the influence of the former economic and political system, we can distinguish two fundamental mechanisms modifying the behavior of individuals and interest groups:

- a) a corporatist system of production and distribution, and
- b) a redistribution system based on family and friendship connections.

In a similar research project realized in Poland on the part of the European Union special emphasis was put on previous corporatist structure and the relations based on family connections predominant in the economy.

and socio-psychological motivation are related to different definitions of goals (if, for instance, we speak of the privatization process, being accompanied not only by a transformation of ownership, but also by the real financial profit of private enterprises). As can be seen, in reality there exist different types of interests and motivations of interest groups which influence the real progress of the privatization process in different, and not originally intended, directions.

(5) *System of Interest Representation in Poland, 1991*. Edited by Jerzy Hausner. Cracow: Cracow Academy of Economics, 1991.

Chapter II

Continuity and Change: The Role of Tradition

Tibor Pichler

Those who do not find a way out of history are doomed. --Elias Canetti¹

The year 1989 brought a fundamental change. Communism, which had been imposed on East Central Europe from the outside, collapsed. A huge geographical area, defined by the Polish historian Oscar Halecki as the *Borderlands of Western Civilization*, gained freedom of action, the opportunity to make a choice and to opt for liberal democracy. The institutional framework of democracy, the formal side of building a democratic society, was introduced. But more essential was the implementation of the values of democracy in the less spectacular walks of everyday life, and making it work and take deep roots. Gaining freedom brought with it the need to redefine and reinvent oneself on the individual as well as societal levels. This was not as easy an undertaking as it had seemed in the first waves of euphoria.

I discern two ways of reinvention: one more historicist, the other more presentist. Which is to be given preference?

A Diachronic Way of Reinvention

In the East Central European region to identify oneself by drawing exceedingly upon history can be a doubtful choice because history in this part of Europe is an extremely disastrous phenomenon. There is no undisturbed continuity, no golden age which could be instrumentalised for the construction of a healthy identity and life project. Nevertheless this does not mean that I favor neglecting history which is indispensable for the unavoidable task of cultural self-illumination in both the individual and social realms.

To understand the burdensome role of history one has to step back and take a close look at the modernization process in this region of Europe. In contrast to the classic Western European processes of England and France, ours is not self-initiated, but reactive. The literature on Central Europe treating the modernization problematic, especially in the period starting with the 19th century, notes the backwardness.² This comes to the fore in comparison with the countries which developed modernity. Reinhard Bendix observes that modernization need not necessarily lead to the state of modernity; modernization and modernity are different things.

Backwardness is nevertheless not a fatal, insurmountable impediment in life; it can be overcome. Indeed there were positive signs of economic and social development in at least some parts of the East Central European region, though, as indicated, signs of modernization do not mean an entire modernization.³ The crucial problem of East Central modernization lies elsewhere: in the area of politics as well as that of social and political psychology. The modernization process went hand in hand with a long-term redefinition of human collectivities in terms of nationalism.

¹ Elias Canetti, *Provinz des Menschen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), p. 41.

² Cf. Daniel Chirot, ed. (1985), *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, California: California University Press).

³ Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Wandel und Modernität* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 59, 63, 71.

Modernization produced nationalism, which in turn raised the question of territorial redefinition. Whereas in Western Europe the state produced the nation, in the East development went the other way round, from nations to states. Ethnically defined national collectivities embarked upon nation-building and eventually, not to forget favorable macro-political circumstances in Europe, upon state-building.

There occurred a multiple clash of nationalisms characterized, as István Bibó⁴ put it, by anxiety and hysteria due to fears of the very existence of national collectivities and to the border problem of determining new national territorial frameworks. National narratives instrumentalised the image of an enemy and projected the nation against the background of a fight against another nation. Negative self-constitution and self-identification produced an unhappy political psychology in the region beset by universal fear and complexes. Thus national identities were formed reactively and these rivalrous national identities are the focus of the resulting problematic political developments of the region.

This history cannot be reclaimed as a natural building block for positive future political development, unless it be critically reflected upon. Paradoxically, the burden of history in East Central Europe is universal; it is, in Eric Hobsbawm's phrase, the stuff from which national, ethnic and fundamentalist ideologies are made; it weighs on nations both "with" or "without" history. The former suffered from too much "history", the latter from its lack. History was a problem and obsession to both. Subscribing to Hegel's *dictum* that only nations with a state "count" in history, a recognized collective political status became indispensable. In the mind of the national intelligentsia national history became a mark of legitimation. This implied mythmaking.

Various forms of nationalism collided, multiple nation-building meant not necessarily multiple state-building, although eventually it came to that. This process amounted to territorial reorganization which poses the question of a link between national and territorial identity.

The most important problem of Central European nation-building is that there did not develop a clear and coherent political public space, and nation-building did not mean at the same time the development of a conscious undivided citizenship. Civil and national agendas intersected, and the national agenda dominated the civic one. There arose the problem of double loyalties: to nation and to state, and sometimes conflicting identities as nation and as citizen.⁵ Somehow loyalty to the nation, unrecognized by the state, was more important to one than loyalty to the state. Therefore a characteristic problem of the region has been multinational states unable to develop a supranational collective ideology or narrative. It proved inoperable to find a supranational "Slav" ideology as well. Development went in the direction of nation states with small or significant national minorities, which makes reflection upon history undependable in the currently topical agenda of social reinvention.

When I use the term reinvention I mean also the conscious effort to find an answer to the question of who we are, and who we want to be. I would like to see the present day requirements and recent experiences as a base for thinking about the development of the future. In this regard I ascribe essential value to the evaluation of current developments in society. But before embarking upon the problem of a presentist self-identification, which includes the results of a critically examined history, I would like to mention the past in a second dimension.

⁴ Cf. István Bibó, *Bieda východoeurópskych malých štátov* (The Misery of Eastern European Small States) (Bratislava: Kalligram 1996).

⁵ On the relation between individual and nation and individual and state, especially in the Slovak case see: Michal Chorváth, *Romantická tvár Slovenska* [The Romantic Face of Slovakia] (Praha: Malý Petr, 1939), p. 25.

Up to now I have treated the past as related to politics, but a second dimension of the past articulates itself in the form of the *longue durée* of cultural attitudes. Culture here is understood not in the normative, but the anthropological sense which concerns attitudes and patterns of behaviour detectable in everyday dealings with the world around us. In this context I would like to mention the negative legacy of communism, and the damage it caused in the field of social and political mentality. It blocked the development of a civic public culture and conscious individual citizenship. It fostered a culture of defensive life strategies, cunning subordinationism and systemic deception: *ex officio* and in self-defence. In this context I mention the misuse of language and semantic dishonesty, the social, political and also the economic bifurcation into official and unofficial where the unofficial was as a rule more effective than the official. The consequence of this was the impairment of citizenship, civil attitudes, civility and of public life in general, not to forget the lowering of the operational force of language. F.A. Hayek in his *The Fatal Conceit* quotes Confucius: When words lose their meanings, people lose their freedom.

Consequently the dissident movement, vindicating the formally inaugurated constitution and law-codes, revitalized the concept of civil society, citizenship and civility. By this they attacked the anticivil spirit of communist neofeudal paternalism and clientelism, the slave logic of the cunning vis-a-vis the power-holders. I would interpret the watchword of living in truth not as a metaphysically couched concept, but simply as an invitation to take the written norms of social and political behaviour seriously, to handle them as real, and not only decorative, norms of communication. Apolitical politics is apolitical only when and if politics is viewed as a Machiavellian technique, rather than as a form of modern democratic discussion of interests. In the former sense there can be no apolitical politics because politics is one of the most important and also most human realms of life — perhaps the most decisive. The condition of humanism and civility rests upon the development of liberal democracy. A sound set of viable humanist ideas must have a background in politics, in real life. Humanistic ideas developed in isolation from politics becomes either senseless or dangerous for lack of contact with everyday life.

The constitution of a free political arena in the wake of 1989 is the most important event in the region which was exposed in its development to strong outside influences. Today there is no rivalry in Europe between various models of political development, but only the question of how to arrive at a functioning liberal democracy due to differences in the developmental stage and concrete situations of various postcommunist countries. The goal should be the attainment of a stable (not to be confused with rigid and inflexible) self-sustained growth oriented society generating and absorbing change.

In this region the process of modernization proceeded in a complicated manner. The transition from traditional to modern society meant at the same time multiple nation building including the formation of new states and territorial reorganization. National collectivities suffered from an instable psychological make up due to existential fear for the whole collectivity and the unstable and insecure borders. The territorial framework was traditionally an object of concern and hampered the development of self-confident citizenship. National modernization conditioned narratives were stories of a suffering and conflict ridden region. The region did not succeed in developing an autonomous free formula coming to terms with this state of affairs. The current situation offers an opportunity, it is up to the populations and their elites to develop solid, rational relationships. The social sciences and the humanities are challenged to contribute to this. One way of doing so is to overcome the burden of history which I have described as a burden of outdated national narratives, national ideologies as doctrines, and the past as a hangover of prevailing defensive strategies (the tradition of subsistence economy).

As the democratization process of post-communist countries involves more often than not also state building, the role of national narration related to the past is a very important current issue. The question is whether to use the national narration or to invent a tradition based in the concept of constitutional patriotism. National narratives more often than not are related to the process of nation building and react to deficiencies and to the formulation of ambitions. They receive their value in a process which is nation centered, whereby the nation means the nation aspiring collectivity, and not in first place a body of citizens. This is the case in national-isms trying to form the nation from a linguistically and culturally defined unit, simply an ethno-nationalism. Ethno-nationalisms make a claim to a share in political power; they strive for a political roof for the culturally defined unit they represent. Their initial starting point is not political; that comes last. The politicization of ethnic national units and their goal achieved, leaves them in a situation where the social and political order becomes important and binding and where attitudes of citizenship are required. So it seems that there is a choice between a national narrative and a constitutional patriotism as identity building elements for a stable liberal democratic society.

The choice is between history and the presentist formal universalist principle. At first sight the latter lacks the citizens and the motivational force because it is too formal, too abstract, too much couched in *theory* as against historical narratives which are loaded with pictures and fictions. Is this a choice of myth against principle? Jürgen Habermas in an interesting article treating the problematic of constitutional patriotism rightly states that the opposition between historical narrative and constitutional patriotism as tools for the development of citizen identity and social cohesion is not a strict one.⁶ Each political culture, characterized by its own developmental history and by specific common experiences, has to have its own way of embracing the formal universalistic principle, which does not apply automatically and in the abstract, but concretely. The reverence for the constitution crystallizes in history, but it is the result of conscious choice and interpretation. It is of considerable importance in multinational societies or societies with strong national minorities and ethnic groups. It forges cohesion on a base of democratic policy making which is open to the participation of the whole population irrespective of ethnic and cultural-national ties.

Isiah Berlin, in his much acclaimed study on the two concepts of liberty, stresses the importance of intellectuals as critical investigators of ideas operating in societies or of ideas put to political use. This is important, for the problem of inventing a tradition is being tackled. A tradition is to be invented when the old ones do not function, or whenever a need arises to establish a new one — which is the case in situations characterized by discontinuities. We live in such a situation of discontinuity: There is no simple way back into history, say into pre-socialist history, and it itself is defective. No working continuity of uncontested historical growth is available. There is a continuity of mistakes, omissions, catastrophes; there is a past and history to be reflected on, but not just narrated. To base a national narration on history as the legitimizing force would be a bad choice. The self-esteem of a society is not positive when it is based on false ideas.

The strength of a society lies in its ability to develop functioning institutions, a strong public life and respect for rules. This is extremely important in societies damaged by socialist experimentation contributing to the split of life into official and unofficial ones. The post-communist East Central European transformation is a matter of the right, i.e. reflexive treatment of past and history, ideas put to work, institutions and peoples and their elites. It is an evolving story of democratization where the beginning has been made through the creation of the formal institutional framework of democracy, but to fill it with appropriate actions is a task which is to be

⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Kleine politische Schriften, VII* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp: 1990), p. 131.

learned. Democratization generates democrats and a democratic political culture. As Attila Agh notes, democracy can be and is being learned within the game. Moreover, non-democratic players also contribute to the development of democracy. The story of democratization is not yet concluded and its ongoing process is the real material for future narrations as well as the space from which new traditions will be invented.

Chapter III

Culture and Human Rights: Empirical Notes with a Metaphysical Conclusion

Jozef Pauer

How can wooden plates with the Solon's verses written upon them, as on the stone slabs of Moses once in history, be crushed and stamped upon by those who should have learned from them the way of fairness and justice? How can even the commandments of Jesus inscribed deeply in the hearts of all Christians and with no physical wooden or stone form be abused, trodden upon, soaked with the blood of fellow Christians, and all this in the name of the nation, law and justice, and frequently even in the name of God?

Law and the legal system (independently of the governing and executive power and besides the principles of majority rule), equal rights of all before law and the preservation of fundamental human rights are, according to L. Kolakowski, the "essential pillars of democracy" and currently its "least disputable criterion" according to P. Ricoeur. Yet these are not enough for a properly functioning government to guarantee all human rights and liberties. Today a legally elected government cannot guarantee, and even many tread on, the equal rights of citizens and on their human rights as well.

Recently, laws, rules and standards cease to exist or fall apart before our eyes if we watch TV, walk in the street or visit working places, hospitals, shops and factories. Everywhere we see corruption and discrimination, a wide variety of hidden or open breaches of human rights and attacks on human dignity (although human rights cannot be substituted for human dignity).

Upon recalling the ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia, Tschetschenia or elsewhere the following excerpt from the U.S. Declaration of Independence comes to mind: "All men are created equal, and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights: life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is construed in the same spirit: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Would people today from Africa and Asia or from any developed country in the West testify to the same eternal ideas as were once written in the above mentioned declarations? Upon reading the UN Charter with its principles and provisions and then comparing it with actual UN policies, the question whether UN policies are in conformity with its declared principle remains unanswered. One of the most typical characteristics of the current world crisis is the fundamental, inherent conflict between the political system with its actual structures of governing power and human rights, west or east, north or south.

Human rights serve as an intermediary philosophy for articulating the broad spectrum of interests in all corners of the world and in all layers of society. Increasingly, they are taken as part of many common and mutually communicated perspectives between the various centers and peripheries which tend to confront one another. The term human rights has evolved into an ethical standard that is subject to individual interpretations, negotiations and adaptations. It becomes a new type of "culture" whose significance, symbolism and practices are by no means neutral or equivocal. Its only constant feature is being perpetually reconstituted and reformulated; human rights are always "in action". In the post-Berlin wall era the question of their universality, relativity or portability is no longer that important.

They have become a part of the multi-dimensional interactions between the centers and peripheries of our global world which is no longer composed of local domains (cultural, ethnic, etc.), but on the contrary has developed into an open manifold of diverse fragments. This pluralism of society necessarily goes hand-in-hand with the destruction of the traditional meaning of the term "locality". Not only have many localities lost their own character and become "victims" of a spatial homogeneity, but the new information media allow us to live in a simultaneity of localities, which however can destroy our sense for adherence and identity. The various cultures of our world have "floated up" from their topologically assigned harbors into the "international waters" where the steeply increasing mobility of man combines with a rejection of cultural artifacts and practices which hold too passively to the "anchor chain". Within this cultural dialogue conducted between "here" and "there" ("we" and "them"), between centre and peripheries, distinct boundaries have been wiped out, which makes irrelevant the question of the appropriateness of human rights.

This, however, does not imply that the question of the mutual intelligibility of human rights between different cultures also was dissolved into the mist above the ocean. Even today we cannot but ask how to understand, based on the topological allocations of each culture, how any other culture is construed. Similarly, the problem of difference between various layers and groups in society remains. The cultural plurality no longer constitutes a problem between different nations, nationalities and regions; it has emerged as a problem within the scope of any society or community alone. The great influx of refugees from non-European countries has situated the issue of cultural plurality in a quite new light in the major cities of Europe.

Human rights currently are presented as ethical values and as such are becoming more universal and more actively applied symbols. This, however, does not indicate that the fundamental problems of values has already been definitively formulated, for the world is not moving within the limits of a linear progression toward a general veneration of human rights. Esteem for the universal scope of human rights quite usually and self-contradictorily is in inverse proportion to the extent that human rights are violated and abused.

The superficial viewpoint, based on deterministic linear causal approaches toward the society and human behaviour has proven insufficient for a deeper understanding of cultural practice. Prefabricated solutions and recipes either for comprehending any person as defined by a list of abstract characteristics or for a relativistic emphasis of cultural specificity in its fundamental sense do not enable us to arrive at a deeper knowledge of the dynamics of human rights and culture. For our contemporary world is symbolized by the dismantling of the Berlin wall, by bridges torn down, by the swelling waters of religious, national, ethnic and other disputes over non-accepted differences. The demands to build these bridges anew are more exacting and hence more challenging than in the past.

The dynamics of human rights and cultural pluralism are not only theoretical problems for experts, philosophers, ethnologists or diplomats. Politicians, priests, teachers, economists, and cultural officers need sufficiently clear arguments for taking and executing their decisions. Philosophy cannot issue absolutely guaranteed recipes; it can only contribute toward the creation of necessary theory, to questioning already existing answers, and to revealing the dubiousness or inadequacy of certain arguments.

For better comprehension of contemporary global conditions of cultural diversity in which human rights act as the decisive value system, the revival of an analytic viewpoint seems desirable. One possible method is to determine how, when, why and what significance human rights have in particular contexts and how do they function in everyday human life — in the "cultural practice" of people.

The approach through human behaviour (taken by the theoretician and practitioner) has a special meaning for the issue of human rights as only the particular actors are then involved. The significance of this viewpoint consists in its direct links with practice. Not only defendants but also the theoreticians of human rights have often expressed their opinion on the relationship between theory and practice, although only exceptionally was this done on the basis provided by real elements from daily practice. If human rights are taken for a system of social practices, then which particular practices do we have in mind; how do these practices become legitimate face-to-face with those practices which they actually replace; and how are they related to other social activities and political standards? Without adequate conceptualization we cannot obtain a clear picture of them, nor can we detect if they are respected or violated.

So if we are to find the way out from this circle of disputes about the universality or relativity of human rights and if we want to unravel the threads of social behaviour and the shades of meaning of human rights, then we have to focus on comprehending them as they exist and function within natural life as lived by man. This does not at all put at stake various international documents that deal with the issue of human rights. These documents do not lose their meaning and importance as the general objective, but gain more sense if situated in a particular context — their urgency is in the tribulations of the lives of common people. Thus the documents cannot be considered as the immediate basis for the efficacy of human rights or as acting in a mechanical causal way.

The approach focused upon the actors deals with the terms emerging from the situations of everyday life, perceiving men and women not as abstract entities, but as concrete persons situated in different dimensions of their life careers. Here the term action is related to an individual actor and his/her capacity to live with dignity, remembering and collecting social experiences and inventing life styles even under conditions of extreme oppression or coercion. As social actors we move in a room limited by constraints of the flow of information, by uncertainties of different degrees and by other stresses, physical or psychic, moral or legal, as well as by political and economic forces. We have to solve problems, become acquainted with the situations which are happening, seek adequate forms of behaviour or intervene in the normal flow of events taking place in our neighborhood. We must proceed along our own track, while perceiving the other people's reactions and paying attention to various casual events. Not all situations, in which we find ourselves, are a direct consequence of our own choice, for we always exist under a large number of mutually linked relationships of subordination and superiority. Even the inferior relationship of dependency provides us with possibilities to influence the activities of the one to whom we are subordinated and thus to play an active role in establishing some areas of our social life.

Seen from the deterministic linearly causal approach toward social movement, any development and change are considered to be direct consequences of the impulse emitted from a certain centre of power such the state or international interests. Triggered by such a mechanism social development moves along some constrained trajectory with different evolutionary stages characterized e.g., by different types of production. The progressive work on human rights often is based on such deterministic models. Of course, it cannot be forgotten that some structural changes are a clear evidence of action by external forces. But all these external determinants enter upon the natural environment of groups or individuals; they act only as mediated and transformed by these groups and individuals, and their mutual relations. Therefore, we must not forget the sense of mutuality in all platforms of social life and in the interplay of mutual relationships between the

"exterior" and "interior". Human behaviour, with its complex structure of human psychics and memory in the background, plays a decisive role in these relationships.

Both human rights theoreticians and activists still prefer the mechanical model of a linear causal series found in the documents on human rights for their practical applications. However, this approach simplifies processes which are much more complicated. During the very process of realization of practices and standards human rights often are reinterpreted or transformed. Nor is there any immediate link between the selected policy and the consequent result in this area. Similar to the social movement and development, the application and protection of human rights are a socially constituted process which is undergoing several, mostly conflicting phases. The solution of these is accomplished through different procedures, such as negotiation, mediation and in extreme cases also the settlement of disputes through court trials. Of course, the solution which would be acceptable by all parties involved can be reached only at the level of negotiation and mediation, in the form either of an exchange of benefits or the construction of new common solutions.

Hence, the implementation and protection of human rights cannot be seen as an easy exercise according to some recipe or "flight plan", at the end of which we attain the anticipated result. We always act in a certain multi-dimensional situation in which we are confronted with the interests and values of other people and groups. The environment for our action is not always homogenous; on the contrary it is heterogenous with individuals and groups having at their disposal different kind of knowledge on which the strategies for their actions are based. Looking at the issue from this angle, in order to arrive at an authentic solution to the conflictual situation we must understand which interpretations and models, interests and values are to prevail and under what conditions. From this perspective it is easier to appreciate the role which the theoretician could actively play in influencing the concrete events by formulating human rights standards. Any philosopher, sociologist, ethnologist, or lawyer who works in the field of human rights will grasp the essence of the social processes through his/her active involvement within the natural life world of acting people.

There is some feedback influence even in this relationship, thanks to which the participants in these processes influence the research strategies taken by the experts and thereby predetermine the outlines of their working results. The "objective reality" of human rights lies beyond the concrete forms of human identification and orientation, beyond the mutual communicative relationships maintained at all levels of social life, beyond the conceptual horizons of individuals and groups belonging to the same culture. As participants in social processes we are open toward the world that surrounds us; when acting we do more than realize some "internal" quality of our hidden ego. In this regard we should draw on the parallel between the various processes of personal, group and cultural identification. Not a single one of these processes can be taken for some privileged accumulated property and fixed in any quantitative or qualitative compartment. The core of these processes lies rather in compartmentalization of the items and events perceived in our living world, how they grow out of our interactions and are results of the confrontation and hybridization of the horizons of mutual acceptance of the participants in these events.

Therefore, all approaches based on tolerance have proven to be insufficient. In most cases they lead, though unwillingly, to an ethnocentric viewpoint. Although this viewpoint emphasizes cultural uniqueness and specificity, paradoxically in the end it ignores any cultural or contextual differences and bases social behaviour on the actions of "atomized" individuals or ethnicities concentrated only upon their own benefit.

The culture of the ethnic, the nation, the continent, etc. cannot be substituted for some abstract, general human substance. Neither can it be considered as a natural object disentangled from the multidimensional flow of human time. It is the human reality which is born spontaneously and consciously organized within the human reciprocity of historical, social and political processes. In this regard, human rights are cultural products of our living world. Therefore it seems more fruitful to focus our viewpoint on their particular character than on trying to make authoritarian declarations about the versatility of human rights. The human rights theory and activities performed for their protection stem from the dispute between our imaginations of human rights and of a fair (in current conceptions — democratic) society governed by law, which originated earlier in spontaneously created codes of ethical conduct, rather than in legal acts.

Nowadays, we cannot be satisfied only with an idea of a law-abiding society, ruled by constitutional law. We need something more than legal acts, something which allows the law to be preserved, to be really binding for all citizens, and to function in our everyday life. That "something" is nowhere to be found; it was never written because it cannot be put in writing. It is certain unwritten sets of rules, certain limiting conventional constraints, never publicly spoken, but which are effectively applied in the reciprocal and joint existence of human beings. Only on this fertile soil of social reality can the honor and merits for human rights grow and be sustained, not to mention a functional legal system or the economic system, which is nothing but another form of human reciprocity.

The goal of each rule of ethical conduct and consequently of each law is community welfare, the good of society and of each of its members. The legal acts as an abstraction from the spontaneously created rules of ethical conduct which are conceived as solutions in the relationship to another person with a certain kind care for human reciprocity. In law the acts are binding and in writing; people are obliged to abide by, preserve and protect the law. But the preservation, the abiding or non-abiding by law is the question which keeps coming back without response, at least without a complete one. One is led toward fairness, toward abiding by human rights standards and law either by strong internal will, or by external force under threat of punishment. The object of internal will is the welfare of another man and of oneself. This relationship, whose goal is the welfare of one's fellowman, is called love in ancient Greek and Christian tradition (*agapé*, *caritas*). Thus to be righteous and fair does not mean anything else than not to deviate in one's activity from justice or equality which is the essential quality of love in the meaning given to it by the Greek New Testament *agapé*, i.e. a unifying force which cares and takes account of the other person in his/her particularity, in his/her otherness. As mentioned above, human rights, constitutional law and the other two essential components of a sound democratic society — majority government with its institutions and mechanisms which warrant equality of all citizens before law — change in conformity with the seasonal and cultural contexts, according to various visions of the world and of the place of the man within it.

The variety of visions of the world has four dimensions that are empirical and one that is metaphysical:¹

- *genetic* vision, in which one considers oneself a member of a family, clan, race, or nation;

¹ See M. Schlemper, "Psychotherapie en wereldbeeld", in *Humanische Psychotherapie, Een anthropologische grondslag* (Leuven, Acco, 1980), pp. 84-124, paraphrased according to J.G. Donders, "Some Hermeneutic Issues on Democracy from the Point of View of Different World Visions", RVP seminar "Freedom and Choice in a Democracy", 1990. See also K. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (Heidelberg, Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1971).

- *personalistic* vision in which one finds oneself in a "You and I" relationship;
- *social* vision in which one becomes a member of a social group or social class;
- a *naturalistic* vision which grows out of the experiences of man as a part of Mother Nature;

but

- in the *metaphysical* vision one does not live as a part of something, but as the one being who is with someone else. It is on this field that the perception of complete unification arises, the idea of unity in manifold and variety comes to effect.

These various visions of the world have also played an important polarizing role in our century: the nationalist ideology of racism under Hitler "*Blut und Boden*", grew up on the basis of a genetic vision, which liquidated all other visions. The Marxist-Leninist ideology of the communist party is based on the social vision, whose particularity has been generalized and promoted on a universally applicable dogma. On the other hand, the general declaration of human rights relates to the personalistic, existential vision; the student unrest in 1968 as a fight for the realization of human and citizen rights for all without regard to sex, race or religion were also instigated by the personalistic vision. Since the end of the 1970s, when the first serious breakdowns of nuclear power plants appeared, an ecological movement, which emerged from the naturalist vision of the world, has dominated.

Inside these different visions of the world all material values of the human world are the subject of fundamental changes. Accordingly, many words are changing their meaning whether it be the term human rights, or the multiple meanings of the term "democracy". It is not so much a question of different politics as to what is more important as that one comprehends oneself in different situations in the world in different ways. Not only in the cross section of our century, but also in these days we are encountering, even in the circle of our families and close friends, persons who proclaim themselves exclusive adherents of socialism, others who adhere to liberalism or conservatism, others who adhere to a genetic vision, and others who stand for "Green Peace". The danger of this situation comes with oblivion of the particularity of individual empirical visions, when any of these visions becomes more versatile or total. The ideal case would be to consider all of these visions as complementary.

The claim to universality originates only on the ground of the metaphysical vision of the world. There one is no longer a part of something and therefore blind to concrete relationships in favor of only the single totality. Instead the human person is a being in coexistence with someone, a person in dialogue with another person. Within this dialogue held with the other, space and time opens itself for our stay in the world, the *universum* of human experience or human history, and for gaining its true meaning and directing it in a sensible manner.

Within this "indispensable" opportunity of the human dimension of life emerging from one's permanent state of openness there is hope that one can manage to sail between the Charybdis of individualism and the Scylla of totalitarianism: that is, between the matching rocks of the two particular empirical visions of the world each with its own variety of fundamentalism as a contempt of human rights and human dignity. Beyond these twin dangers of being deprived of the eternal sense of living, we open into the "flow" of comprehensive fulfillment. This properly human evolution takes place only in history which originates from the activities performed by men. The "pendulum" of history must not be at either limit, either the extreme of the atomized individual, or the opposite extreme of the group; neither can replace the whole.

The horrible chaos, which we are still witnessing, could be resolved if we use these particular experiences as the basis for a common dialogue as part of our human activities. This dialogue

seems utterly plausible, despite essential differences between the two empirical visions of the world.

The foundation for this dialogue is the metaphysical vision, through which we open ourselves to other persons, our radical loneliness being transformed into the radical openness of our existence with others and with the Other. It is right there, in this "mystical" dimension of human life that there opens the possibility of progress along the road of comprehensive understanding of human mutuality, of unity in variety, of equality and unification in love. It is in this dimension where we do not deviate from love that we reference ourselves in terms of, or "lean out" towards others and to the totally Other. This is not such-as-we-are, though of it we are the living picture.

This implies that life should be lived in mutual respect with one's fellows on earth, under heaven. One may pose the question of whether such sensible dialogue of "equals" and of the righteous could take place at all. In my opinion, it is possible. But in our world we lack a sense of anything sacred, the sense of esteem of other, culturally different approaches toward the human reality. There is an absence of holy respect of something totally Other, for the transcendental connection with our common metaphysical "roots" has been completely disrupted.

Without this sacral dimension, indeed without the sense for anything sacred, human rights and law cannot be sacred anymore and one surrenders oneself utterly to the world in which "everything is permitted" and in which one can but retreat to a radical state of absolute loneliness.

Solon, the Athenian statesman and poet, and many of his contemporaries considered the law and order of society to be sacred. This was true as well for Plato, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa. . . . And yet the order has been disrupted again and again; this is an eternal mystery.

Chapter IV

The Problems of Management Linked with the Privatization Process and Conflicts of Interests

Jana Gasparikova

One of the very important socioeconomic phenomena with decisive impact on the management of enterprises is the restructuring process. The means for restructuring enterprises not destined for privatization often are summed up in three categories:

- a/ legal restructuring or corporatization
- b/ commercialization
- c/ rehabilitation

a/ Legal restructuring was introduced in order to give public enterprise a separate legal identity. Often this was accompanied by rehabilitation. The new corporate identity freed public enterprises from tedious procurement procedures, enabling them obtain credit and foreign exchange on their own terms without prior approval from the government. Even if the enterprise remained in the government's portfolio, legal restructuring made it easier to improve enterprise performance and its measurement.

b/ Commercialization was another method used to reform the public enterprises remaining in the public domain. The government allowed the public enterprises to act as private commercial enterprises by cutting off subsidies, allowing them to set their own prices, and to raise their own investment and working capital. Once commercialized, the public enterprises did not have to comply with the social objectives often insisted upon by the government.

c/ Rehabilitation began with management studies, and led to organizational restructuring. As part of the rehabilitation process, the public enterprises were given new loans from the government for equipment and debt restructuring. The government also took responsibility for the public enterprises' debt equity conversion (1, p. 67). The law concerning the rehabilitation and revitalization of enterprises was widely discussed in the Slovak Parliament. All three ways of restructuring were used to a certain measure in Slovakia.

The other type of restructuring is the privatization process, behind which were different interest groups that very substantially influenced the management of enterprises at the top level in Slovakia. This privatization process especially at the top level of management reveals the socioeconomic and ethical problems linked with the formation of new owners of enterprises and consequently new managers.

d/ The goal of the privatization process in Slovakia is the transformation of state property into private property with different private owners. This process concerns also the problems of restructuring the economy in Slovakia. Foreign authors distinguish two different types of restructuring linked with privatization: a reactive, passive type struggling for survival under the pressure of strict budgetary limitation, and an active type of seeking major changes and active adaptation.

The first type is characteristic mostly of enterprises dominated by insiders, managers and employees; the other type is realized by foreign owners of former state enterprises. All these entrepreneurs bring new capital and managerial know-how, and consequently have preconditions

for active restructuring linked with new investments and a new managerial approach. This type also seeks new approaches to property, control in privatized enterprises, and management.

The results of the privatization process in the transition of state property to foreign owners and the share of foreign investment and capital in such types of companies and enterprises in Slovakia are the following:

In September 1996 the volume of foreign investment capital in the Slovak Republic was 845 Mil. USD = 25,3 billion Slovak Crowns.

Predominantly the enterprises with foreign capital in Slovakia are more economically independent. They have their own management and ideas common in OECD countries. The economic sector is characterized by large corporations with a separation of management from ownership. This means that economic power is transformed from the class of capitalists to the hands of a small group of professional managers,¹ who are expected to use all their professional abilities in improving the management of the enterprises.

It is important to know if this strategic planning linked with strategic management is accepted in our enterprises where there is no foreign investment. In order to understand this it is necessary to grasp the kind of privatization process in our enterprises, especially in medium and small enterprises, where there is a share of foreign capital.

The Privatization Process in Slovakia

The results of the privatization process in Slovakia former Czechoslovakia are found in the following figure which show the percentage of privatized property.

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
17,5	20,0	25,8	30,8	38,6	44,6	60,2

¹ One of the important requirements for the real economic development of large enterprises and corporations is strategic planning or management. This strategic management is focused not on grand strategy (at the macro level), but on management on the tactical level and on the management of operations (at the micro level). It is connected with long-term planning taking into account not only the behavior of the firm, but also of its environment. The concept of strategic management of industrial companies has undergone a characteristic development during the last 30 years. In the early postwar period the strategic problem in a firm was formulated as a technical-economical mismatch between products on the one hand and the demand of the market on the other. The solution of the problem was strategic planning based upon rational analysis of the company's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the environmental trends. Recently, strategic planning has been changed for strategic management. This is a combination of two facts in the company's relation to the environment; firstly its competitive behavior is characterized by creating profits (performing regular and well known activities based upon experience from earlier managerial and economic operations with relatively small risk of failure, especially due to the impact of new technologies on organizational and managerial set up of firms), but also creating potential for profits. In short, the competitive behavior aims at creating results while entrepreneur behavior aims at creating the potential for results.

This strategic planning is connected with the goal of influencing the market, a new kind of financing, a new strategy on the markets, etc. One of the most important relations is that motivating corporatist culture to a sense of product and market. This strategic management is market-oriented and takes into account purely economic and market relations.

The privatization process has proceeded very quickly since 1995 so that generally we can say that privatized or private enterprises are dominant in the Slovak economy, with the exception of banks and some infrastructural sectors. For instance in Slovakia there are 48,520 profit-oriented organizations and of these only 1,558 or 3.2 percent belong to the public sector and 46,962 or 96.8 percent belong to the private sector. The situation in large enterprises is similar where the ratio between the public and private sector was in favor of the private sector by 174 to 143; in middle-sized enterprises it was 1540 to 395; and in small enterprises the ratio was 3152 to 308. These large enterprises have very strong and influential lobbying groups working in order that from the banks or financial institutions they receive good credit.

A special characteristic of the situation in Slovakia is the formation of a class of new economic owners of big enterprises after the first and second wave of privatization and the new economic lobby connected with its interests. These new owners really influence the strategy of enterprises, not only on the level of top management of subsidiary enterprises and factories, but also on the level of the business and the firm.

A danger linked with the foundation of the new lobby system and its strong influence is connected with the very important influence of newly created interest groups on management boards which influence the real decision making process in Slovakia. These newly founded large privatized enterprises have their own influential people in all strategic posts. Consequently if the internal state policy is dominated by the influence of these lobbying groups reinforcing their own power and interests, it may not reflect the real economic interests of other enterprises.

In Slovakia there is a real danger of too few lobbying groups, which can compete among themselves. This can disguise a dictatorship by the powerful lobbying groups of some of the most important Slovak enterprises. This corporatist situation influences also state interventionist policy on a broad scale and consequently the decision making process at different levels. It influences also the management in different kinds of enterprises, which in this sense is not dictated by pure economic reasons such as profit maximization and the promotion of real market, but by different political reasons.

If we compare this type of management with the type of management in OECD countries we can see the difference. Corporatism in postcommunist countries can be defined as a system of interest intermediation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed by the state and granted a deliberate monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports. It is characterized by a corporatist system of production and distribution, a redistribution system based on family and friendship connections as mentioned in my introduction.

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Chapter V

Interests Which Have Influenced the Privatization Process in the Slovak Republic

Jaroslav Nemec

Based upon the socio-economic developments monitored by relevant statistical and informational services, for the time being it is impossible to draw a complete picture of all participants entering the privatization process in Slovak society with their specific interests and attitudes. Apart from the aforementioned fact, however, it is quite possible to describe interests, attitudes and motives which existed even before the privatization process began. These were phrased and rephrased during privatization as the positions of particular interest groups towards privatized property. They changed along with the method of privatization.

Factors in Privatization

In conjunction with privatization, it is important to see:

- how various groups within Slovak society differed from one another with regard to privatized property;
- what attitudes and opinions those groups expressed towards various privatization methods, especially towards privatization through direct sales compared to that through distribution (coupon method, distribution to municipalities and pension funds, etc.); and
- what was behind the interests of those groups in relation to privatized property, the execution of rights and ways of utilizing privatized assets (production and reproduction).

Not all citizens were and are equally interested in the privatization process, for which reason they did not show the same interest in obtaining privatization-related ownership rights, though there was no official and/or formal reason why some groups of citizens should be excluded from privatization.¹ Practice has shown also that the intensity of privatization-driven interests of different groups varies significantly.

The differences result from the following factors:

1. The natural form of the property privatized - certain types of property can be used effectively only if an owner possesses certain skills, expert knowledge, experience, business contacts with suppliers and customers, etc. Of course, not every citizen is able to meet such criteria. Further, this would not (even theoretically) be possible, since not everyone could become a manager.
2. Different degrees of real power and control of assets delineated for privatization, which means in practice that certain groups (managers or officials) manipulating state property had had

¹ In practice, coupon privatization has proven that the individual's right to participate in the privatization of the state property has been officially recognized. At the same time, this shows that the practical enforcement of such rights was possible.

that kind of control before privatization was actually launched. This control was based upon the authorization those people were given to administer economic, managerial and production activities in state-owned enterprises,² central state administrative bodies or the political institutions on which the whole state system was based.

3. Assets available before privatization and opportunities to acquire necessary capital through loans, joint ventures, or other approaches.

4. The subjective evaluation of privatization opportunities which each citizen had to make, as he/she went through paragraphs 1-3 above. Such an evaluation meant practically that people tried to evaluate how probable it was for them actually to gain (with what they had at that time) the right to conduct business with property acquired through privatization in competition with other applicants.

5. State political decisions about the mode and conditions of the privatization process. Those decisions significantly influenced the citizens' self-evaluation along with the conditions described in paragraphs 1-3 above. It goes without saying that both the prerequisites for the effective execution of managerial and ownership rights and the distribution of real power in the society played a crucial role in a citizens' decision making and in forming their attitudes towards privatization. The influence was, of course, different when coupon privatization was followed, especially compared to the situation when other methods of privatization fully replaced the coupon method. Thus, it is obvious that privatization through direct sales changed the position of an average citizen and his/her chances to become an owner of assets being given away within the privatization framework. The decision to apply the direct sales method excluded the majority of the population from privatization, while those remaining became competitors. In this situation, coupon privatization would have been able to secure equal conditions for most people. The slight inequalities which remained even in the coupon method, such as different levels of awareness and information had by citizens about privatized property, are of a completely different nature compared to the inequalities typical of direct sale privatization.

To sum up, the privatization decision by state authorities significantly influenced citizens' attitudes towards privatization and determined the way privatization would be implemented. Other relevant developments depend on the following:

- what are the most intensive and influential interests: financial institutions and investment funds, or managers and other leaders from industry, or trade unions;
- given the existing power and interest distribution, what role would the state administration be willing to play in privatization especially with respect to the economic consequences of privatization and global social impacts; and
- to what extent would interest groups be willing to accept certain limits put on privatization for various reasons (capital strength, social consensus, economic status of the country, etc.)?

Thus, based on the above five factors, an active interest in privatized property could be expected from those who either had at least the minimum cash necessary, or were able to get the

² Such authorizations were legally based on provisions of the so-called Economic Code whose provisions were designed to meet the requirements of the state planning system and state-owned property managed within the plan. However, the provisions also constituted concrete power for concrete people executing various functions in the economic system, which power always could be used to reach personal or private goal.

cash through loans or joint ventures with foreign or domestic entities. It was mainly executive managers, members of top management, employees together with managers, or owners of already privatized enterprises who at that time could meet those conditions. In addition only a very few individuals, either holding important positions in central state administrative bodies or having strong political ties, could join the thin group of potential privatization participants.

Taking into account the situation of the Slovak cash deposits market and the so-called "pre-privatization positions" which were based on real control of administered state-owned enterprises, it was no surprise that groups rather than individual bidders were able to succeed in privatization. Those interest groups fought each other, as could easily be proved by numerous scandals and controversies published in the press on an almost daily basis. The published information, however, does not allow us to determine the structure of the interest groups more precisely, since the main movers remained behind the scene.

Here we can only speculate on possible combinations. Fights between old communists and new management interest groups have been frequently mentioned. This competition structure is not at all exhaustive. The privatization participants represent a wide range of individuals who differ from each other in political background and professional career history. Besides, managers in old state-owned enterprises should, according to valid organizational charts, come from different professional environments. The break-down of huge state organizations and conglomerates resulted in a significant migration of managers. Thus, all those interested found themselves in a situation where they were all insiders. Officials from former general headquarters, managers in the enterprise, people from smaller operational units and outlets all knew the real value of privatized property and all had approximately the same potential to meet the formal privatization criteria.

Managerial and other interest groups were being formed on the basis of family ties³ as well as a result of local and regional contacts between the members. All groups were trying to build solid political backups through alliance with various political parties. However, their interests did not have a common ideological (or any other) grounds. In all cases, it was a marriage of convenience, or in other words a temporary alliance based on expected support in executing managerial and ownership rights related to privatization and to resulting problems.

Regardless of the real buyers' interests that were shaping the privatization process, official privatization decisions usually stressed productive development of privatized enterprises as the top priority.

The same was true in all cases when a sufficiently strong "pre-privatization position" combined with a real interest in the development of the enterprise in question. But there were cases where a real interest was clearly missing, and yet buyers with no interest but a strong "pre-privatization position" were able to take advantage of the privatization process by selling acquired ownership rights to third persons while pocketing profit from the transactions (which is why rich foreign investors were and are always welcomed).

Coupon Distribution

At its very beginning, coupon privatization was mostly connected with ideological and political interests. However, during debates over privatization, real economic interests started to form and be expressed by authentic entrepreneurial groups expecting a real outcome. At first sight

³ *Trend, the Economic Weekly* provided the facts about privatization of concrete enterprises with respect to family relations in an article by Anton Marcinin on October 9, 1996; "We Should Get Rid of the Consequences of Nepotism in Privatization," page 22B

it might seem that only common employees and pensioners were really interested in coupon privatization. On the one hand, it is logical that those two groups of people were indeed interested in coupon privatization since, due to their financial status, they did not have any other way of participating in privatization. On the other hand, those two groups with thousands of members had only minor impact on the decision making process. Major decisions in this regard were taken by leading investment funds and the financial institutions which established those funds. In the end, neither investment funds and their founders nor the political groups supporting them succeeded in a full practical implementation of the coupon method.

The employees' privatization interests should have been defended by trade unions in the newly created "tripartite" system. However, in the first few years of privatization, hardly any of the privatization issues were to be found on the agenda of the tripartite meetings. In addition, political representatives did not show their true attitudes towards privatization.

Political parties repeatedly stressed the equal importance of all privatization methods, though in reality some methods clearly were being preferred over others. The preferred methods were officially proposed as tools satisfying global needs of the whole society (and not the personal needs of particular interest groups).

Such an ambiguous approach put some political parties into totally unexpected positions, and subject to ironic remarks and comments by journalists. Thus, parties which until then had been clearly labeled as left, right or middle were now acting unexpectedly in dealing with privatization issues. The party which had been expected to enforce the broadest citizen participation possible (i.e. coupon method) was now supporting the direct sales privatization method and vice versa; parties which normally would not support the coupon method were now defending that method and calling for its broader application.

Such an inverted defense of coupon privatization in the Slovak Republic clearly showed that it was not the global civic interest of the whole society which drove privatization. Other, already mentioned interests, drove the process instead. Potential further application of the coupon method gave investment funds and other groups a clear chance to increase their economic influence and apply their experience. Thus, those financial interest groups introduced the practice of so-called "wild spontaneous privatization" into the coupon method.⁴

Coupon privatization was not, in any of its decisive aspects, inconsistent with the interests of top management. For those who did not have enough capital for privatization, a combination of standard and coupon methods represented an advantageous way of coping with the capital insufficiency. When managers bought only a part of the enterprise, with coupon privatization there was still a chance to acquire the remainder through coupons. When sufficiently supported by political will expressed by decisive forces, such combinations might have had many advantages compared to competing privatization projects. Thus, coupon privatization could have become an appropriate supplement to standard privatization.

Managers as official administrators of the state property, however, came into conflict with the coupon method in enterprises where there was a real chance that they would be replaced by investment funds, banks, and other competing interest groups. In addition, a real privatization interest, almost as a rule, was shown before the preparation of privatization projects. Privatization had very often its prelude, generally known as "wild spontaneous privatization". That is why privatization projects were frequently submitted after the enterprises in question already were under the control of certain groups. Coupon privatization interfered with such control and therefore

⁴ See, for example L. Klinko, "Will Coupon Privatization Result in a New Financial Oligarchy?" *Pravda Daily*, Financial Report Column, Sept. 21, 1994.

threatened results already achieved in the "wild and spontaneous stage". Managers and other potential buyers could no longer be sure about privatized property, while others had new opportunities based on the coupon method. Thus, a conflict of interests lay at the very core of all debates over privatization methods; those debates, however, were presented officially as a battle of different privatization schemes prepared by political parties and their leading representatives.

Besides managers and their interests in privatization, there were also employee groups whose priorities were different from the generally stated employee objectives. In other words, there were structured employee groups belonging to certain enterprises and having as an objective active participation in the privatization of that enterprise. Such objective interests were the bases of many concepts relating to an appropriate structure of ownership in privatized facilities. The goal of all proposed concepts was to find a *modus vivendi* for mutually contradictory interest: the interest of entrepreneurs was to increase their capital and wealth through conducting business, while employees wanted to improve their position by privatization. Although both entrepreneurial capital and the employees had one common goal, namely, a privatized enterprise, it was difficult simultaneously to satisfy the ownership concerns and the wage-related requirements in privatization. Concepts were sought for some form of mixed ownership which would best meet the objectives of both groups. The authors of those concepts simply wanted employers and employees to share one facility with all the positives and negatives of the relevant party.

ESOP Approach

Proposals dealing with the new structure of ownership relations differed from each other significantly, especially in the early stages of transformation. They were based on distribution-like privatization and on direct sales methods. Sporadically, other proposals were introduced: ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plans), privatization through the establishment of cooperatives,⁵ preferential rights for employees in the privatization of the relevant facility, the regular sale of shares, and other modifications. It is necessary to stress that some of the proposals connecting the interests of employees, employers, and owners in Slovakia were inspired by ESOP plans implemented in the USA and other countries.

The object of this alternative (which has several followers in Slovakia)⁶ was to overcome certain limitations stemming from collective ownership and to make it possible for individual representatives of employees to own part of a respective enterprise. The solution was allegedly connected to special shares through which both capital expansion and rapid workforce development could be reached at the same time. However, the authors of such proposals in Slovakia overestimated the strength and intensity of the employees' interests. Such interests could have been successfully enforced in practice only with sufficient strength of employee groups. Had such a primary interest existed, at least in a latent form, it would have been possible to form strong collective interest groups consisting of many employees. That, however, did not happen.

In enterprises with employee ownership participation, respective employees either put coupons into that enterprise or bought its shares. Both alternatives resulted from (and were only a supplement to) the activities of management which frequently had obtained decisive stakes in

⁵ See M.D. Plachtinský, *Cooperative Society*, No. 23, 1993.

⁶ Gustáv Lesyk, a lawyer, is one of the most active followers of the ESOP model. He not only explains the advantages of employee ownership participation, but also has put significant effort into the practical realization of such projects.

advance.⁷ Employee interest was vivid, especially in regions where privatized facilities represented the only job opportunities or where employees felt that their job status was being threatened. Such activities were similar to prewar movements enforcing the establishment of cooperatives, supportive societies and so-called "kampeliékas."⁸

The above facts show that employee interests are strictly individual in nature. No wonder that such individual interest, when competing with the interests of other potential bidders, has proven to be insufficient and weak.

Within the framework of currently privatized facilities, employees have a chance to own shares, which they can sell. But this form of ownership does not in every case secure their jobs. One way or the other, selling the shares often is the only alternative offered to the employees and it is hard to say whether their choice would be the same if they had another alternative available. Such ownership and employee-employer relations might be consistent with the development needs of the respective enterprise, but definitely does not create the strong collective entrepreneurial awareness which is the basis of all ESOP models.

Interests of pensioners, medicaid beneficiaries, and other groups of the population are much like those expressed by employees. If not organized, such groups remain only small minority groups whose interests are relevant only when some large and decisive group needs them in order to satisfy its own ambitions. That explains why legal amendments proposing that part of pension funds should be covered by privatized property, or more precisely, by money gained from privatization, were not introduced into our legislation, although such amendments were prepared in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and other countries.⁹

Besides the aforementioned groups, political parties played and still play a crucial role in the privatization process, since their representatives hold important positions in government bodies and take part in privatization proceedings. Last but not least, we must also mention the role of foreign bidders in shaping the process.

Those are the groups whose interests are enforced through privatization or act on behalf of some other group which does not directly participate in privatization. The second part of the last sentence is especially relevant for political parties striving to create an economic basis in order to exercise their influence in practice. Assets which currently are at stake are to be had only through direct sales, which in turn explains the limited and half-hearted interest of political parties (regardless of their position) in coupon privatization. On the Slovak political scene all the parties which have had the chance to rule showed a "correct sense for reality".

If we realize that state bodies and the power connected to them legally should administer privatized property and manage not only the moral aspects of privatization but also and primarily quick and effective economic transformation, then this "correct sense for reality" is not promising for the future.¹⁰ This could be proven easily by a detailed analysis of the post-privatization period.

⁷ See G. Lesyk, "Shadows of Direct Sales", *Pravda Daily*, May 13, 1994.

⁸ *kampeliékas* — a form of cooperative savings institution existing in the First Czechoslovak Republic before the World War II.

⁹ For example articles by V. Kluson published in *Politiká Ekonomie*, No. 10(1990), *Národní Hospodářský* 47/1990, *Hospodářské Noviny* 47/1990, *Politiká Ekonomie* No. 1/1992; or M. Vancová, "Is Coupon Privatization a Scam?", *Hospodářské Noviny*, June 16, 1994; and F. Nepil, "Are There Any Savings in Slovakia?", *Hospodářské Noviny*, June 16, 1994.

¹⁰ In an article on October 9, 1996, *Trend, the Economic Weekly* provides useful and detailed information about the consequences of that "sense for reality". It also describes the privatization policy of the current ruling parties with special attention to the process of strengthening their political and economic power over

The name for such an analysis could be "political power and its impact on interest deformation during transformation towards a market economy in the Slovak Republic," and the emphasis would be upon the period after the transformation of ownership rights.

Notes

1. In practice, coupon privatization has proven that the individual's right to participate in the privatization of the state property has been officially recognized. At the same time, this shows that the practical enforcement of such rights was possible.

2. Such authorizations were legally based on provisions of the so-called Economic Code whose provisions were designed to meet the requirements of the state planning system and state-owned property managed within the plan. However, the provisions also constituted concrete power for concrete people executing various functions in the economic system, which power always could be used to reach personal or private goal.

3. *Trend, the Economic Weekly* provided the facts about privatization of concrete enterprises with respect to family relations in an article by Anton Marcinin on October 9, 1996; "We Should Get Rid of the Consequences of Nepotism in Privatization," page 22B.

4. See, for example L. Klinko, "Will Coupon Privatization Result in a New Financial Oligarchy?" *Pravda Daily*, Financial Report Column, Sept. 21, 1994.

5. See M.D. Plachtinský, *Cooperative Society*, No. 23, 1993.

6. Gustáv Lesyk, a lawyer, is one of the most active followers of the ESOP model. He not only explains the advantages of employee ownership participation, but also has put significant effort into the practical realization of such projects.

7. See G. Lesyk, "Shadows of Direct Sales", *Pravda Daily*, May 13, 1994.

8. *kampeliékas* — a form of cooperative savings institution existing in the First Czechoslovak Republic before the World War II.

the country. See Anton Marcinin, "We Should Get Rid of the Consequences of Nepotism in Privatization", p. 22B.

Chapter VI

Economic Interests in the Transition Period: The Case of the Czech Republic

*Daneš Brzica*¹

Introduction

Since 1989 there has been a radical shift in the interest structure of Czech society. Until that time there has been only a simple model with dominance of the Communist Party. The dismantling of the centrally planned economy and the fall of the Czechoslovak socialist regime in 1989 led to a more liberal environment, where interests of all kinds were able to develop. The previously formally expressed interests of party members and other citizens, embodied in several government controlled organizations and parties, have been substituted by a wide variety of political parties, EGOs, etc., each with its own goals and priorities. All these characteristics can be applied to the economic sphere, where some of the above mentioned organizations also are directly or indirectly present. In the following text we will seek to describe and to a certain extent identify and analyze various interests in the area of the Czech economy, as well as various clashes of these interests.

Interests, in the view of G. Morgan (1986), are "a complex set of predispositions embracing goals, values, desires, expectations, and other orientations and inclinations that lead a person to act in one direction rather than another". However, in our paper this term will not be used explicitly very often, the truth being that in the case of the Czech transformation the entire process is driven by political as well as economic interests. We shall use the power of economic and other agents (hereafter referred to simply as 'power') according to the standard definitions from the field of power theory and organizational behavior (A. Kaplan, R. H. Tawny and others), where it represents an ability of individual groups to influence the behavior of others (see e.g. D. Brzica, 1996, for more discussions and for linkages to the Slovak corporate governance model).

Peter Drucker (1989) in *The New Realities* argues that despite the fact that theory still stresses only one organized power center — the government — both polity and society in developed countries have many power centers outside and separated from government. Whereas earlier all pluralisms were based on power, the present pluralism or 'new pluralism' is based on function. This new pluralism challenges us in five areas:

- the social responsibility of the pluralist institutions;
- their community responsibility;
- their political responsibility;
- the individual's rights and responsibilities; and
- the role and function of government in a pluralist society.

The development of institutions linked to the above-mentioned areas probably will improve the situation regarding power and interest conflicts as a consequence of completing privatization. After privatization the process of property transfers (and related to this all possible interest

¹ The views here are those of the author and cannot be attributed in any way, to the Institute of Economics, SAS.

conflicts) will no longer take place between state and private agents, but among private agents only.²

At the moment it is very difficult to assess whether the power structure is sufficiently created along the lines of the major political parties. I. Fišera, a left-oriented Czech politologist, presents his classification of power relations, based on an examination of Czech political relations from an historical perspective. He used the following simple period classification, characterizing various models of power relations since 1945 (Fišera, I. , 1996):

- a) post-war explosion of the dream about national unity (1945-1948);
- b) 40 years of degeneration of the communists' dream about a total unity of interests;
- c) new explosion of the dream about natural, national and civic unity (1989-1992);
- d) attempt at universalistic monetarism;
- e) growth of the influence of non-political interest structures (more visibly from 1994 to 1996);
- f) recovery of democratic dialogue (1996-).

This classification can serve as an example of one view. Of course, different views are presented by right-wing and centre politicians. Especially the last three periods confirm the fact that with the changing power of the largest political parties and with changing economic conditions there has been a significant shift in the concerns of different interest groups, namely trade unions. At the beginning they were silent supporters of universalistic monetarism, but then moved towards becoming a more radical element in the power structure.

Among the other most important and influential groups in the Czech Republic, to name but a few, are: financial and industrial groups, political parties and the media. Of course, it is necessary to include a broader variety of interests here, represented and articulated by the government, the administration (in the American sense), and various non-profit organizations (EGOs).

Legal Structure and Conflict of Interests

The changing environment is a typical feature of the transformation process which is accelerated by the pressure of interest groups, and consequently by changes in the legal framework. One important example reflects a change in the attitude of the administration and the government towards restitutions, not only in its content and degree, but also in time framework. As an illustration of the dynamism of legal changes, J. Vyvadil (1995) points out that in 26 years, while civic legal rules had been amended in the period 1963-1989, only five times, in the last six years it has been amended 13 times. During those 26 years civil code had been amended six times, but in the past six years nine times. Possible contrary arguments like the fact that these rules belonged to the old systems can be avoided by presenting another set of data, e.g. that since its introduction in January 1, 1993 Act No. 586/1992 Coll. on income taxes has been amended 13 times; Act No. 229/1991 on land has been amended six time.

Government, Political Parties and Interest Groups

² With some possible exceptions, as e.g., the nationalization of private firms using some British cases as an example.

The government consisting of a group of responsible executives occupies a central position in the political framework and faces a more complex and dynamic environment. This fact exposes the government to an increasing number of pressures from various political opponents and interest groups. Both parties and interest groups, however, themselves have been affected by the growing number of everyday issues and must react quickly and efficiently in order to be successful.

Since the beginning of the transformation there have been a number of conflicts of interest among various individual actors. Initially this was between radical reformers, to use this term for those eager to follow a so-called "shock therapy," and the gradual reformers who favored less radical strategies. The initial conflict has continued in the conflict between proponents of voucher privatization (mostly radical reformers, named after, e.g. Dr. Tríska who belonged to the radicals) and opponents like V. Komárek and M. Zelený who have stressed standard methods as being more useful.

Whereas Zelený proposed to use more management buyouts and employee buyouts in the privatization process, the Czech government had gone through a first and second wave of large-scale privatization including a fair share of non-standard privatization. The other difference in these approaches was the fact that Tríska *et al.* has proposed a rapid change of ownership while their opponents had agreed upon a less dynamic pace for ownership transformation.

The next phase of interest conflict occurred when most of the state property had been privatized in the course of large scale privatization. As mentioned earlier, privatization has been, together with the macroeconomic stabilization of the economy, the most important part of the economic transformation program. Representing a massive transfer of property from the state hand towards private hands it always has been at the very centre of various private interests, giving possible space for illegal dealing. In a famous case, the head of Centrum kuponove privatizace, J. Líner, was accused of disclosing internal data and corruption and sentenced to seven years in prison.

In 1997 the head of the Fund of National Property (FOP) decided on the distribution of the money from small privatization which reached 25-30 billion CZK. This is a matter of strong debate with ODA, e.g., announcing its plan to use the bulk of this money for the protection of historical monuments. In the past, before and in the course of privatization, there had been several political debates on this issue.

Trade unions have always been powerful organizations of workers and employees. The power of trade unions has decreased due to a decrease in the number of members. A comparison of 1980, when more than 90 percent of the total work force was organized in the trade unions, with 1990, when the level was slightly over 60 percent, leads to the conclusion that mass membership in trade unions is a thing of the past — and this is characteristic also of many other institutions from socialist times. The growing private sector, (now less than 40 percent unionized) lacks the incentives which drove trade union organization so high in earlier times. Nevertheless, trade unions are still strong enough to exert pressure on the government, as was evidenced by several threats of strike.

To sum up, two struggles have taken place: one among political parties about the concept of transformation, and the other among private agents over resources and state property. Of course, the two conflicting processes have been interlinked and the actors involved usually had stakes in both. In order to be more precise in our description and analysis, we will incorporate Dahl's structure of power aspects mentioned in J. Harsanyi (1962). This structure consists of the following five aspects:

- base of power;
- means of power;
- scope of power;
- amount of power;
- and extension of power.

The analysis of the base of power in the period of transformation requires focusing upon the general structure of the resources available for control and use. We mention here some of them, stressing more a tangible one like state property than a less visible one such as future power and influence. This can be analyzed better at the company level, but such studies analyzing the Czech situation have not yet been carried out. On the means of power, one has sufficiently precise data on various techniques. We can mention briefly here promises as a typical instrument for gaining power and which had been used by HC&C company during the first wave of voucher privatization. This strategy brought to the company a significant share of individual investors and enough power to control a substantial part of the Czech business sector.

The scope of power, i.e. an action that a power holder wants to obtain from a targeted person is also relatively wide because there is a broad range of political, social and economic goals of power holders. In the Czech case it could be, e.g., to stop nuclear power plants, less or more foreign participation in privatization, more trade linkages with country X, etc.

Some businessmen have expressed their view, mostly informally, that certain political steps of the Czech politicians, especially in the first period of transformation (in early 1990s) worsened the position of the Czech enterprises in making contracts with several countries. The last two categories, the amount of power and the extension of power, are also difficult to analyze, but it is likely that where processes with a higher political effect (election success) or a higher economic effect (restitutions and privatization of huge properties) are at stake, there will also be higher pressure from interest groups (e.g. the Catholic Church and the KDU-SL party in the case of restitution of church property) and extensive debates over solutions.

According to some politicians like J. Kalvoda from ODA, a right-wing political, there is still a large element of state control over the private sector. The Czech banking system, dominated by several major banks, some of which have substantial state capital, controls the business sector via investment companies and the investment funds they have established. In addition to this, the banking sector exhibits a high level of crossownership among the largest banks, which gives them more stability and power over small private banks trying to compete in the market (see Table 1). On the other hand, it should be noted that for citizens as well as for firms it is now relatively risky to deposit funds in small banks because of their high number of failures.³

Table 1

Crossownership of the Czech banks after the first wave of voucher privatization

Shareholders (% share)	Privatized Banks				
	CS	IB	KB	CP	ZB
Ceská sporitelna	-	0.50	4.90	2.00	5.00

³ Since 1994 onwards there has been a chain of bank failures starting with Kreditni a prumyslova Banka and Banka Bohemia to a total 12 bank failures thus far.

Investicní banka	8.80	17.00	10.80	4.10	10.40
Komerční banka	3.90	-	3.40	-	-
Ceská pojišť'ovna	0.20	3.00	-	-	-
Zivnostenská banka	-	-	-	-	-

Source: OECD

Recent discussions have concerned how to privatize the biggest Czech banks, and whether to restructure them first and then privatize or, vice versa, to let the owners restructure them.⁴

One real conflict of interests is about the Act on Conflicts of Interests which for many years has not been passed. For example in October 1995's voting the representatives of ODS, KDU/SL, KDS and MUS were against, while ODA, KSM and SSD were for the proposed Act.

Conclusion

The paper describes very briefly some issues concerning economic interests in the transition period of the Czech republic. The Czech transformation started in 1990 in the situation of a state dominated-centrally planned economy. It was clear from the beginning that some transformation measures (which in fact had been prepared throughout the 1990-1992 period) would be necessary in order to avoid the threat of a return to the pre-1989 period.

Any transformation of ownership from state hands to private ones had been seen in the first period of transformation as a way towards democracy, as a contribution to breaking up the former command economic system. As it was planned to carry this out relatively quickly the voucher method was chosen as a dominant approach and for this purpose. The priority given to the speed of ownership transformation, however, led to several failures in the process itself, especially in the period when investment funds and investment companies began to use their financial strategies of collecting shares both for improving portfolios and for imposing better corporate governance on companies controlled by them or (in the worse cases) to transfer money from the funds into the private hands of managers. What must be considered positive in this process is the fact that it was conducted under politically democratic rules and principles.

Our brief overview of some elements of the Czech economic power structure has not provided the reader with all aspects of social transformation from the point of view of economic interests. Such analysis will probably be available later, after a longer period, when it will no longer be a politically sensitive matter for all interested parties. Some references to foreign authors listed below should provide the reader both with theoretical background and a basis in the broader (theoretical) area relevant to the topic.

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⁴ Similar discussions are ongoing in Slovakia and constitute a "hot issue" in the debates among political parties, including those in power.

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Chapter VII

The Place of Ethics in the Business World

Dagmar Smreková

If all actions and human life as a whole were predestined in an order encompassing all possibilities, individual decisions would become purposeless. The question of morals as a specific normative and regulative element of human behaviour would be irrelevant. However, the singularity of the human adventure, so enthusiastically defended by Sartre, is based on the fact that we are free in our being, that we have an opportunity to act differently, that as active individualities we always have an opportunity to choose goals and the means to realize them, and that the surrounding world is one of possibilities. In the end, thus understood, freedom assumes moral behaviour; free activity assumes moral evaluation and there is responsibility for the results of our actions (though the question of moral responsibility can be doubtful, for example, in cases of extortion).

In the context of economic activities and relations, the free market enables the freedom of individuals. The market is the place where the exchange of goods and services and entrepreneurial decisions are realized. The question about the place of ethics in the economy arises because economic decisions and activities in general (regardless of whether they are fulfilled by the government or by entrepreneurial subjects) are related to other people: consequences related to the application of their freedom to decision-making directly or indirectly affect the quality of their life. Exactly here it is necessary to search for bases for passing moral judgements on economic behaviour. In this relation entrepreneurs must decide whether what they choose with respect to their own interest and profit is not only legal (respects the law) and rational (in the instrumental sense of preferring an optimal balance of profits over expenses) but also moral (socially acceptable from the point of view of norms of goodness, rightness, honesty, correctness, fairness, trustworthiness, etc.).

Naturally, the moral judgement in entrepreneurial behaviour and its evaluation as morally correct or incorrect, right or wrong, is related to predictable consequences even if these be only adjoined and not intended. A Slovak author, E. Višzovský, who deals with the question of human activity in the context of responsibility calls attention to the fact that the unintentional consequences of our activity can be many times worse and dangerous than the intentional ones.

The key problem of ethics in the world of business relates to answering the question of whether maximization of production and profit is the only purpose of an enterprise, or whether there are enterprise-related values (of right and wrong) which exceed the sphere of profit. In other words, should an ethics be normatively corrective of the decisions and actions of entrepreneurs and, more broadly, would this contribute to a more humane economic order. Could this perform the function of critical reflection at this present unhealthy stage of change?

The History of Business Ethics in Central Eastern Europe

At first view, it seems that the question about the place of ethics in the world of business is already answered. In advanced market economics there is a real boom of business ethics as a discipline, which is already in its second decade. From the USA it has penetrated gradually to western Europe namely, to Germany, France, Switzerland and other countries. For 80 years,

economic ethics, business ethics, ethics of management, ethics of advertisement, etc. have been developed in multiple theoretical studies and articles, as well as on the practical level in various types of business faculties, management schools, as well as in the fields of philosophy and ethics. Renowned business companies have made their ethics codes inseparable from their production and business activity. These ethics programs have moved even into the banks and stock exchange activity as an essential component of their marketing strategy, oriented toward not only to bring a client in, but to keep him as well.

This trend of thought — developed in the USA upon the traditional social responsibility of the establishment, and upheld in France by the effort to define rules of behaviour in the business world and to create a social business identity — is more than a fashion today. It is a widely understood effort to investigate, not only economically productive, but simultaneously value-laden and socially acceptable forms of economic behaviour. From the philosophical point of view, this change is a remarkable deep penetration of ethical values into a sphere traditionally perceived in strictly economic terms.

In Slovakia, until now the term business has been little used in theory or in practice. Even before the year 1989, that is before the change of political relations and the economic transformation, this trend was almost unknown. To be precise: the question of the relation of ethics and economy in our country was linked to the centrally planned economy with the intention of supporting the social ownership of means of production. All activity consciously was planned and managed from one centre to which the lower links of the social and economic structure (business, households, and individuals) were subordinated. In this relation priority was given to such issues as equality, critique of private ownership, and the compatibility of these phenomena with preferred ethical conceptions.

However, it is necessary to add that the command system and the ethical conceptions defending it had serious handicaps. Making decisions about source allocation, expenses and the distribution of products were based on such controversial principles as egalitarianism, doubts regarding the right of private ownership, and other non-economic criteria for decisions about what, where and for whom production would take place, etc. The absence of natural market relations based on supply and demand constantly confronted the consumer with an insufficiency of different goods and services. On the other hand, it led to morally unacceptable practices of selling goods under the counter, outside the official distribution network and for a bribe, which resulted in a deformed system of market relations. In sum, attempts at establishing a market order based on coordination by means of state economic planning had permanently failed, as well as the ethical conceptions which should have justified this process. The fact, that hollow legislation had been enabling the germs of a market economy, even in the lap of the command system, did not change things.

The question about the place of ethics in the economy has become urgent in Slovakia against the background of a rising market society. In the framework of universities, as well as in the field of social-science research, several specialized research centers have been established that provide an institutional context for experts focused on business ethics (in Bratislava this is especially the Economic University, the Philosophical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and the Department of Management of the Chemico-Technological Faculty of Slovak Technical University). Articles and studies inspired by the works of renowned American and European authors are being issued. Several economically powerful and strategically significant establishments realize the need to construct and retain a good reputation as a condition for a stable position in the market. For this reason, along with an orientation to profit they try to incorporate

moral values into the behavior of management, as well as of employees. This includes for instance: responsible relations with clients in offering top quality products, using the newest knowledge and technologies, emphasis on the long-term consequences of their activity in relation to the environment, correct attitude to competition as shown for example in advertising not being based on depreciation of the competing product, etc. Famous firms actively utilize visits by foreign experts in Slovakia to educate their staff in business ethics. In 1996, for instance, in the petrol plant Slovnaft Bratislava, I. Crawford, an employee of P-E Batalas Company from Great Britain, spoke on "Total Quality Management", and R.C. Solomon from the University of Austin, Texas, USA, spoke on "Ethics and Business".

After several experiences with the functioning of market relations, many entrepreneurs have understood that if they wish to be strongly competitive with proven foreign producers and to gain the trust of domestic and foreign customers they cannot choose the strategies of exclusive profit orientation and survival at any price. Moral values have come to be perceived as a factor which, together with legal responsibility, form the business firm's identity.

However, it is not only the pressure of enthusiasm for ethics coming from advanced market economies which has stimulated business ethics (ethics of management, ethics of advertisement, etc.); above all, these processes are related to the transformation of economics from the commanded to the free market system. Privatization depends upon new legislation, the formation of an entrepreneurial environment and the growth of mutually competing companies, a boom in the banking sector, the initiation and development of the stock market, etc.). Moreover, under our conditions, the question of the place of ethics in economic decision making has appeared unexpectedly in relation to the distribution of the former CSFR properties and ownership of DIKs in Czech companies.

Still, the penetration of moral norms and values into the world of business in Slovakia is not yet comparable with that in advanced market economies. There are several reasons. First of all, business ethics as a science investigating businesses behaviour from the point of view of moral principles, norms and values does not have a tradition in our country. Longtime rigidity towards free market elements in practice and an informational barrier before 1989 meant that foreign developments of this academic science did not reach us. Only later, in the process of economic and social transformation was space first opened for attention to this theme. Economist M. Kovaka was among the first to work on the relation of ethics and economy in relation to transforming the economic reality in our country. On the level of common economic theory this author raised the question of the relation of ethics and economy in connection with the theory of rational expectations. The rational nub of this theory is the utilization of the knowledge and anticipation of macroeconomic realities to influence the behaviour of economic subjects. Searching the meaning of rational expectations opens space for issues of morals and the study of what the author named economic ethics, constructed on the base of common ethics.

Another reason why outside developments of business ethics did not show up in our country is the fact that in the business sector as a whole, which only recently has been constituted, moral norms are seen as a possible source of practical dilemmas. Responsibility for consequences and the requirement of moral means in the realization of economic objectives is, in many cases, perceived as an obstacle to economic effectiveness and the generation of profit.

Moreover, the trend to evaluate business success by the ability to maximize profit in a short time, works against business ethics. Simply, in the business sector, where there is a great hunger for capital, limited credit sources and high insolvency, the trend toward building a firm's image through attention to moral values which orient toward responsible long-term behaviour has not yet

become popular. Many business persons are not yet accustomed to the rule that no profit excuses immoral behaviour.

Finally, another factor which dissuades from accepting moral norms as a permanent part of business behaviour is that in the new growing market environment there are many non-standard examples of behaviour (breaking agreements, non-paying of debts, non-observance of righteousness in sales, corruption, tax cheating, conflicts of interests. These put one who works morally at a disadvantage in comparison to those who bypass the rules.

In transforming society with little developed competition in some service branches, with insufficient legislation and inadequate inspection mechanisms, there has not been enough time to create an atmosphere (supported by the pressure of public opinion, societies for consumer protection, and especially the development of competition), in which businessmen would persuade themselves that it is not worth being deceptive. In his work *De cive*, Hobbes wrote: "People's activity comes out from the will, and the will from the hope and the fear: so that whenever people see that greater good or less wrong results for them from breaking rules than from their keeping, they break rules consciously." Simply, the developing market has not yet constructed such self-correcting mechanisms that would automatically sanction breaking market rules and eventually result in the elimination of conscious anti social market behavior. In an environment where ethics is not an internal component of the economy, keeping moral norms represents for many businessmen an additional expense that puts them at a disadvantage vis-a-vis less correct competition.

Ethics in Business

In this context the question naturally arises why moral norms and values should be introduced into so self-sufficient a sphere as that of economic decision making and market behaviour. Is not the law enough for the co-ordination and regulation of the differentiated individual and group interests? From the strictly economic point of view, where effectiveness and profit are the measures of success, accenting ethics can appear to be of little importance.

Finally, from the point of view of conservative market theoreticians, a moral and value dimension is irrelevant to the functioning of the market. In the thought of Hayek, for example, uneven market results are not consequences of the intention or idea of some concrete authority or of an individual will and, in principle, it is not possible to predict them. Hence, it is not important to apply such value criteria as those of fairness in the distribution of property or responsibility for some people to get things which others do not have. Hayek, it is true, does require fairness and rejects deception, however, he understands all moral system as rules of correct individual behaviour that define the space of allowed performance, i.e. they have generally a negative character, because they determine only what is not possible to do. Such rules can apply to the style of running an economic game, but not to its result.

We agree that it is possible to take responsibility only for consequences that are intentional or able to be expected. However we would stress once again that a businessman should not renounce responsibility for consequences that could be expected, even if not intended. The establishment is not so morally blind in its expectations as to be unable to distinguish morally controversial strategies and activities from those that are socially desirable. In the end, in a highly developed competitive environment an establishment could not be prosperous without customers willing to purchase its products. The question of trust, reliability and good name in this context plays an

important role, because these moral qualities today represent the conditions of a stable and promising position in an established market.

A similar though not so sharply formed opinion as that of Hayek is found in social philosophy in Slovakia. According to M. Márton the motivation to build basic ethical requirements into the system is dependent on the longer time horizon where the basic goal is profit maximization. Márton does not deny an ethical dimension to economy, but would seem to put it in question if the primary orientation is profit maximization. Were such an orientation to set aside moral self-control it would produce a rogue market, especially if business success is evaluated in terms of the ability to get rich quickly. However, what would happen to the order essential to the market if cheats prevailed.

A. Rich, a Swiss pioneer of business ethics, objects to the conservative economists' standpoint. A rational economy cannot operate simply in terms of the principle of profit maximization. The role of an economy is not only to provide merchandise and services in sufficient amount and with the needed quality required for dignified human existence. It should do this in a way that prevents reducing workers to things, as purely manufacturing tools, and on contrary enable the worker to gain the status of an engaged, co-determining and co-responsible individual.

The statement of conservative economists that the goal of entrepreneurial subjects is oriented to profit and by nature outside of morals is problematic from J.S. Mill's point of view which considers an element of freedom to be the right to arrange one's life by oneself and to do what we want to as long as we do not cause harm to others.

In the context of our reflection, the note by Millon takes on new meaning, if we realize that the main part of people's life-time as consumers, users and clients is linked to providing and utilizing possessions and services, and that the quality of life depends on the quality of the products being offered. This raises the moral problem of whether it is moral to debase a person's life and to profit from damage to a consumer for short-time advantages. In the background of this question it is possible to identify the liberal requirement of respect for the individual human person which appears in the form of defence of consumer rights against harmful activity from the side of business.

We join those supporters of business ethics who understand the moral dimension of the world of business to be more than respect for the law. This is a pre-condition for morals, but it does not guarantee that an enterprise will be morally correct and responsible. In practice it means, that an immoral behaviour, though not against the law, yet can seriously and negatively interfere with the lives of many people. (For instance, monopoly producers, price-fixing, etc.)

The acceptance and observance of moral norms (in contrast to the rule of law) is not able to be enforced and sanctioned by state power. However, the problem of order is not generally solved only by government power, but is linked to the citizen's willingness to participate in it voluntarily. In this context, morals have a special position because of their non-institutional method of normative regulation, especially beyond the range of the established law.

Today, the world of business is not immune to pressures to respect values exceeding those of profit. The question of values is important from the point of view that the aim of business is different for each of its participants. For the shareholders it is profit; for employees it is to be properly valued for their work; for consumers it is interest in buying and using good quality properties and services for a reasonable price; for the surrounding community it is interest in being able to live in an environmentally unobjectionable and quiet environment; for civic initiatives it is sponsorship by prosperous firms.

On the level of practical business activity, the mission of business ethics is to investigate and clarify a matter on which the law is silent, namely, what is the morally correct or incorrect, good

or bad, honest, right and reliable behaviour in concrete business situations and how to solve the moral dilemmas in everyday entrepreneurial practice. As indicated in the introduction, ethics has to have the power to fulfil a critical function in relation to the economic realm. In this connection we have adopted the argument of the French author, H. Puel, who says, that if the economic forgets its responsibility to contribute to a humane economic order, then ethics should remind her of it.

The dispute about whether ethics has a place only outside or also within limits of the economic order is not yet finished. However, the fact is that in the business world and in the sphere of economic decision making there appear problems which by their normative and value aspect exceed the powers of economic calculation. This is why ethics should not be only a tolerated appendix or a supplement to economic questions, but, on the contrary, an important attribute.

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Chapter VIII

Nation and Transformation

Karol Kollar

The last decade of the second millennium in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe can truly be characterized as a decade of a breakthrough social change. The change of social systems is historically most widespread and unprecedented. It stems dynamically from the democratic revolutions at the end of the 80s and is a widespread social process with global importance. Historically it may be compared with the situation in post-war Germany, but under conditions of peace it has no equivalent or precedent. Therefore there is need for interdisciplinary analysis of the set of parallel processes which characterize this widespread social change.

While in sociology the terms exogenous and endogenous are frequently used for social changes according to the place where the change is actuated, here we speak about a complex process which pervades all the structures of the social system: the process which interests more or less with all social components and subsystems such as the political, economic and cultural, as well as their broader social surroundings. Social change as a creation of modern democratic open societies – or a humanization of post-totalitarian societies – is accompanied by the revival of a large palette of social problems and questions. Present experience indicates that the process will take longer than was assumed in the euphoric time of the revolution, because the number of open questions, which represent actual and acute challenges, have a tendency to rise in number as well as in urgency. There is room for a question of nation and many related phenomena that area extremely topical in the process of forming post-totalitarian democratic societies.

Present historic social change results from the breakdown in Europe of an already non-existing, “experimental,” social system which for nearly a half a century was a political hegemony oppressing nations of Central and Eastern Europe. After the abolition of conflict between East and West contemporary Europe stands at a crossroads. Paradoxically, relatively non-violent means have led to the loss of the relatively stable bipolar structure of Europe, which indeed meant the inhibition of emancipatory efforts of its small nations.

On the other hand, in Europe there currently are simultaneous process which significantly interfere with the existence of the European states, nations and their cultural and social functions. For the West European region the continuing process of gradual economic, military and t some degree political integration is characteristic. Yet in spite of that it stresses the will of the citizen and his or her identification with newly created structures. Concurrently, in recent years in the other part of Europe there has been established a politically and economically relatively unstable situation, the next steps of which now are hard to predict. This is characterized by a split in the former supranational hegemonic structures and the shockingly rapid processes of national emancipatory movements by conflicts among some of its smaller national communions.

Such a development in Central and Eastern Europe has made it a necessity to choose a future direction, so that nowadays a part of Europe is choosing one from among a number of new alternatives for social-cultural development. This controversial reflection has become the essential question; probably it includes also the problem of the change of formerly totalitarian social systems into systems of plural democracy and open civic society. This situation requires theoretic analyses of the real problems of modern European nations, namely, their identity under the complicated conditions of the historical rupture and the systemic transition to democracy in the broader context

of Europe now reshaping itself. The actual situation, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, markedly evokes a historical parallel with the situation in the second decennium of the 20th century, after the split of three great multinational and multi-cultural states and the discrediting and downfall of their monarchic-nationalistic ideologies. There followed a vacuum of ideas very quickly filled with the ideologies of rising totalitarian dictatorships.

After the loss of the Cold War, in countries freed from totalitarianism there occurred a similar and ideal vacuum, which is a fertile (and theoretically relatively sterile) ground for all possible socio-pathological phenomena and tendencies. This is a serious argument in favor of systematic orientation for research in this sphere, for the solution for actual social problems of our complicated world lies in theoretical knowledge. Along with this as regards related problems of nation there is need to pay more attention to basic terms and to their definitions. Namely, in this sphere there exists a whole set of terms which frequently are misused also in theoretical publications and unhappily in concrete politics.

The problems of nation and related phenomena in our world became questions of open and constructive academic debates only later, i.e. in a post-November period. In such a way, the national problem was meaningfully marginalized in research in the last half of century, or was considered solved by “the universal class principle,” to which the national principle was subordinated. The state-bureaucratic research system in the humanities in that period was in fact tightly controlled by “the theoretical principles of proletarian internationalism.” A temporary peripherization of the national problem and phenomena arose in a postwar period in democratic societies, but only for a short time due to other reasons. At the turn of the 50s in Europe the idea of integrated and united nations emerged, in which context the topic of nation and nationalism was discredited. Nation and nation state, two terms which since the 19th century had represented the center of political activity and thought were eclipsed in an economically and politically unifying Europe.”¹ In the following period these problems only very slowly attained the status they had in the academic context. The reasons for that, according to such authors as B. Giesen, was the gradual marginalization of the national problem and its replacement by fashionable new forms of collective identities, which became more interesting for current theoretical analyses.²

In the last decade interest in problems of nation, national identity and nationalism have markedly risen, and these terms have become again the object of theoretic analyses and redefinition. In Western Europe this wave of interest paradoxically was caused by continuing integration which has been creating a new suprastate and supranational structures (and fear of a loss of national identity). Additionally, the marked migrations characteristic of Europe of the late 60s, which resulted in the arrival of a great number of strangers to the classical nation states of Europe, also stimulated a rise of interest in national problems.

One of the actual motives, which led to an increase of attention to these problems by Western European theoreticians, was stressed by the German politologist and politician, P. Glotz, namely, the import of nationalism from Eastern Europe. The leitmotif for his thought is that though nationalism in West Europe is weakening, simultaneously some cautious but definite symptoms of revitalized nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe have been emerging, which, in turn, would provoke a revitalization of nationalism in the West. In other words, West Europe fears “the replacement of a fractured Marxism-Leninism by the old popular nationalism”³ which would destabilize the political situation in the West. In this connection, the author made a further sarcastic

¹ P. Alter, *Nationalismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), p. 7.

² B. Giesen, *Nationale und Kulturelle Identität* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), p. 59.

³ P. Glotz, *Irrweg des Nationalstaats* (Stuttgart, 1990), p. 19.

remark that “some late Hegelians believe that the collapse of communism would bring some kind of end of history, but this is mere non-sense.”⁴ In spite of all the expectations of the European liberal intelligentsia, nationalism does not weaken, but on the contrary, is again renewing itself.

In the other half of Europe the revitalization of interest in problems of nation, national identity and nationalism is definitely connected with a disintegration of the ossified bureaucratic-totalitarian systems since the end of 80s. This social change evoked not only a revitalization of many temporarily frozen problems, but also an end of the pseudo-validity of some theoretical constructions related to understanding the national problem through the prism of class. Revitalization of some social problems was surprising also to some theoreticians of that orientation, despite the fact that history teaches that totalitarian social systems and bureaucratic dictatorships have not been able to solve definitively any important social problem, but only temporarily shunt it aside or through ideological means to hide it by repressive bureaucratic methods. There was purposive misuse of the absolutization of the class principle, its alleged universal superiority and a fetishization of internationalism, all of which served as basis for delegitimizing ruling powers.

Today a demand for a serious theoretic reflexion on actual social processes, which are more important, is very urgent. In this situation there is need for a serious analysis of the problem of modern European national status as a cultural historical phenomenon framed by the complicated conditions of a systemic transition from totality to democracy.

For such an analysis, with an accent on its anticipatory function, the key term is “nation.” Unfortunately, even in academic papers, the term often is used vaguely and with many denotations, frequently with a pragmatic political meaning. The wide palette of concepts of “nation” (comparable possibly only to the number of definitions of the term “culture”) is nowadays in need of theoretic categorization (and cataloging). The mere categorization according to the methodological standpoints of various authors of these concepts would be the matter of a whole paper. A brief attempt to categorize definitions of the term “nation” or its primary differentiation can be found, e.g. by the German theoretician, O. Dann. In this “National und Nationalismus in Deutschland” he writes that in many volumes of West European provenance (and not only in Western ones – K. Kollar) which concern the national problem and related phenomena, there can be distinguished two large groups.

The first includes all papers in which the history of a nation, nation changes and connected phenomena are analyzed as naturally developing phenomena. In these papers the existence of a nation, its origin and development, creation of a nation state and the other developmental forms are considered to be an historic process whose legitimacy cannot be doubted.

Contrary to this historically oriented thinking are a large number of papers from the opposite provenance, written mainly after World War II which deal with nationalism and its derivations. In those papers nation is dealt with very critically. According to O. Dann these were deeply influenced by an analytical structural and ideal historical approach towards stating the question wherein the chosen theoretical approach plays the important role.

These two different interpretations of the topic of a modern nation stand apart with nearly no connection to one another. It is very significant, too, that authors who deal with the problem of nationalism do not include their own nations in their conceptions of nationalism; from their point of view, nationalism is present only in other nations. Further O. Dann writes, that only Germany stands as an exception and that in West German historical papers from the 60s it is common for the history of the German nation from the time of Herder to Hitler to be considered as the history

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

of nationalism. The author remarks that there has not yet been an attempt to compose the whole picture of this kind of nationalism, and there already arise questions of the meaningfulness of subsuming the whole history of the German nation under the term “nationalism.”⁵

In reality, in spite of a marked growth of papers on this topic in the West Europe in the last decade, most theoreticians return again and again to an original question in understanding nations and national movements, namely, what roles they played and play in the development of history.

Before concluding this reflection on some approaches to the importance of “nation” in the process of social change, it should be stressed that it is very important to deal seriously with the categorical apparatus of the topic. Caution and judiciousness are indispensable here as they are socially extraordinarily sensible and often vague or changeable terms with a broad semantic ground – for which reason they often are matters of dispute, and not only in academic circles. For these reasons a redefinition of these terms is absolutely needed, especially of those which are not stable but could be permanently verified through open theoretical discourse.

Conclusion

The process of transformation of post-totalitarian societies is the widest, the most complex, unprecedented a long-lasting social change of its kind in modern history.

A great number of problems, (e.g. social, economic, political, cultural and so on) must be solved by the newly forming societies. These are of two types. On the one hand, there are problems which causally relate immediately to a transformative process; on the other hand, there are problems which emerge from totalitarian systems where they were not solved, but inhibited or ideologically obscured.

Among questions which fall into both the above-mentioned categories is that of nation and the phenomena immediately connected with it, such as national identity and nationalism.

Questions of nation and connected phenomena arise in a transformative process due to their marginalization by totalitarianism as well due to the downfall of a number of group identities and former value systems. Indeed nations and national identities are relatively stable phenomena, the value and attractiveness of which increase in an era of social rupture.

Currently, theoretical reflection upon the problem of “nation” and its social functions is schizoid and polarized. Basically, there are two considerably opposite approaches: the naturally acceptant and the critical, which do not relate to each other.

The categorial apparatus also is schizoid, inconsistent, vague and confused. To this theoretical problematic there must be added considerable socio-political friction and hence political, functional or programmatic reasons the term often is misused.

The present theoretical attention to the problem of nation in our country is insufficient; it is stochastic-mosaic and sporadic. Therefore a broadly based interdisciplinary longitudinal analysis of the problem of the modern nation, especially national identity and nationalism, is needed.

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⁵ O. Dann, *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland* (Munchen, 1993), p. 346.

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Chapter IX Beyond Rationality

Tatiana Sedová

Rationality, in the sense of an appeal to a universal and impersonal standard of truth is of supreme importance . . . , not only in ages in which it easily prevails, but also, and even more, in those less fortunate times in which it is despised and rejected as the vain dream of men who lack the virility to kill where they cannot agree. B. Russell

I believe, that the link between rationalism and humanitarianism is very close. K. R. Popper

The year 1989 confirmed the validity of the aphorism by Alexander Herzen that history has no libretto. In the transition from communism a couple of delayed Hegelians saw "the end of history", while others saw in it "a return of history" to democracy in the context of Central Europe. However, it has brought with a spectrum of issues for whose solution there are no guaranteed recipes. Although the initial euphoria has evaporated and geopolitical nostalgia for "Mitteleuropa" has retreated to the background, nevertheless, some phenomena accompanying the transition in Central and Eastern Europe can be explained through the prism of the specific culture of Middle Europe. According to Carl Schorski, this has erected a new social-cultural type of human being — "homo psychologicus". Despite the sad fact that the spirit of this culture and its sources were destroyed both by Fascism and by Communism, nevertheless, some features of the Central European culture, in both its positive and negative senses, have determined the phenomena against which present post-communist countries are fighting. I think of such issues as: nationalism, various social anomies, searching for separate identities, tensions in political culture between liberal and national-populist orientations, participation and exclusion, democracy and nation, elite leadership and the crowd, etc.

Many of the phenomena, connected with the transformation of a society that has rid itself of the yoke of the guardian state, often have been explained by "the freezer" hypothesis, i.e. that the difficulties associated with upgrading were suppressed by the totalitarian state which swallowed up the entire society. As the binding ideological structure integrating the society was fictitious, after it collapsed old problems broke out with renewed power.

One of worrisome phenomena accompanying the year of great hopes was the unprecedented movement of population, the largest since the end of World War II. Ten thousand Turks were extradited from Bulgaria; about 50,000 ethnic Hungarians moved from Transylvania to Hungary; a reunited Germany provided a new home to Germans from the Volga basin and other regions of the former USSR. The causes of this literal "movement of nations" were ethnic and national conflicts.

Nationalism, to which a death certificate had been issued by both Liberals and Marxists a long time ago, has been enflamed with a new power and new lines enlivening old ones producing new animosities formed under its banner. They have resulted in a bloody civil war and ethnic cleansing on the Balkan Peninsula, casting doubt upon the claims and faith in the possibility of a rational solution of the tensions created in the alliance between politics and nationalist ideology.

Nationalism — a History and a Psychology

The events following the collapse of the communist regimes revealed a vacuum between the state and society. This threatening heritage of communism need not be filled by a democratic political system, but could be replaced by some form of a corporative socialist or autocratic regime using nationalism as an integrating ideology. This leads society into a crisis when formerly accepted values are reversed and devalued. Adam Michnik remarked that reprivatization is accompanied by raging national collectivism. It is legitimate, to a certain extent, to explain the passionate search for identity and its new self-expression as effects of a foreign ideology which did not ascribe any weight in its philosophy of history to such forms of human community as nations, considering it to be a reactionary force. In uncertain times of crisis, however, when the economic and social transition has a hard impact upon inhabitants, calling for national identity can appear as a point of reference and support, a light in the darkness. But if such unity is only "an artificially constructed form" decorated by a mythologization of history and a demonization of people who think differently, then this form of identity turns into a dangerous fetish and phantom. In the hands of a skilled demagogue it can mobilize crowds for actions whose destructive dynamics and irrational movement cannot be managed.

It is necessary to take into account also the fact that national slogans, depending on particular historic circumstances, express various contents. In this sense, the national awakening in 1948 cannot be converted according to a common denominator with nationalism after 1989. Nationalism as an ideological system is an historical variable which can be supplemented by a psychoanalytic factor from the arsenal of the psychology of the crowd, for it is the crowd with its specific forms of behavior and response that controls the historical scene in times of crisis. Its need of conformity, and of identification with certainties is related more to its emotional components than to sense. A national ideology performs a compensating and substitute function in this direction: the world of national symbols and of values contaminated by emotions becomes independent of the real world and lives a life of its own. For whatever aims, the society or a part of it is mobilized by a national ideology as a defensive mechanism against frustrations of various kinds, against various uncertainties and threats. This defensive mechanism bearing in itself also a considerable potential for aggressivity forces out rational control in the solving of given problems. Scared people do not need enlightenment, but salvation and are addressed by anything in which they see a promise of being relieved of their uncertainties.

Times of revolutionary changes are always times of great question marks, of uncertain prospects and possible nostalgic restorations of yesteryear's lost world. From the point of view of the psychology of the crowd and that of psychoanalysis, it is characteristic of a national ideology: 1) that it induces and implies an idea of the nation as a collective entity with a transparent structure and unambiguous universal identity, seeing in it a face-to-face community linked by ties of common origin, language, culture and common aversion to neighbors; 2) that it implies the thesis that the nation needs inevitably a pseudo-religious rejuvenating movement with a gallery of martyrs, heroes, turncoats and renegades, with its own rituals and ceremonies, cults and mythicization of its own past; and that 3) the nation declares itself as an absolute sovereign, an upside-down absolute monarchy requiring no empirical records and mechanisms for the creation of political will (B. Löwenstein).

A psychoanalytical explanation of nationalism concerns rather the mental condition of the people as a nutritious soil of nationalist slogans. There is obvious affinity of the above mentioned signs of nationalist ideology in culturally and historically different relations. Those features bind

together the excessive nationalism of the times of Jacobean terror, German National Socialism, and manifestations of nationalist passions in post-communist countries.

Of course, in restricting the focus only to what is common to structural and functional egoism and regarding its psychological dynamics as susceptible to this infection, we abstract from the particular historic expressions and contents which differ depending on the historic context. At the same time, this psychological framework does not allow one to comprehend nationalism only as an atavistic, non-functional, irrational etc., as it frequently is seen by the sociological and historical approach.

The Typology of Nationalism

The historical approach offers a little different perspective for the explanation and assessment of nationalism, which can clarify particular constellations by which various hopes, expectations and experiences are linked with nationalism. In the first half of the 19th century nationalism was announcing "the springtime of nations" and performing emancipationary liberal functions, being a promise of removing political and social unfreedom. In the period between the two World Wars, however, it had acquired a bad reputation particularly on the basis of the perverted nationalism in German National Socialism and Fascism. This prejudiced the explanatory schemes for enlivening nationalist passions in post-communist countries. However, it is questionable that this revitalized nationalism is only "a freezer effect" or a consequence of "delayed nations" (H. Plessner) of the Central European region.

Depending on the functions performed by nationalism in certain cultural and historic context, the basic typology of nationalism according to P. Alter can be accepted. Alter distinguishes nationalism into the *Risorgimento* and so-called integral types. The model for the first is the Italian nationalism of the 19th century; its ideological protagonists are J. G. Herder and Giuseppe Mazzini. It is characteristic of this that national independence is closely connected with the requirement of individual freedom. The advocates of nationalism of the *Risorgimento* type were internationalists - at least on the level of theory. Their concepts encompassed many of the elements of liberal ideology and appeared as an idea of a more humane and fair world, though on the level of political practice the idealism of the theory disappeared under the pressure of ethnic egoism. The fate of the Habsburg monarchy with its multinational structure is a model example.

This type of nationalism experienced its acme in Europe in the times between the Vienna Congress and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. It passed through various metamorphoses, depending on whether the emancipatory component of nationalism was oriented toward coordination of the society through the creation of sources and distribution of political power (political nationalism) or was directed to promoting economic interests (economic nationalism), or was aimed at culture, education, language and literature as constituent elements of national identity (cultural nationalism). Separate forms of nationalism were manifested with various intensity, in various sequences and at various times in various nations. As a rule, political nationalism took precedence over cultural and economic nationalism.

The French writer Charles Maurras is the father of the notion of integral nationalism, being identified indicated also by the adjectives extreme, radical, reactionary, rightist or excessive. C. Maurras understood nationalism as a replacement for religion, having its roots in the cult of earth and of dead heroes, putting absolute claims on an individual as a member of a national collectivity. Integral nationalism denies the *Risorgimento* idea of the equality of nations and of their claims, uncritically praising its own nation, mythicizing its past and history and demonizing enemies. The

advocates of integral nationalism are ready to enforce their ideas also through violence, as they see the individual existence as subordinated to the life and needs of a higher unit - the nation. Integral nationalism became dominant in the first half of the 20th century, although its historic roots can be traced to the nationalism of the Jacobean terror. Where the political aim of the *Risorgimento* was to create national states, integral nationalism has been developed as a means of expansion and of channeling the internal problems within the existing national states. Its most flagrant forms are the collectivist movements after World War I and the fascist parties.

Theoreticians have agreed with the thesis of Eugene Lemberg that the creation of integral nationalism was preceded by real and also by fictitious threats to national existence: a certain crisis of national self-consciousness as with the defeat of France during the Prussian-French War of 1870 to 1871 and the German defeat of 1918. These military failures were felt by both the nations as unprecedented ruptures in their histories; integral nationalism declared itself a revival and national purging turned against parliamentarism, liberalism, internationalism. Supplemented by anti-Semitism, it offered an integrating ideology that was to cement the shaken society.

As P. Alter notes, regarding the political events in Germany, Great Britain and Italy since the 19th century Lemberg's thesis regarding the conditions of the creation of integral nationalism should be broadened by the economic and systems crises of the social system, enabling the creation and spread of integral nationalism. The emergence of the working class must not be overlooked, for its association with the political sphere is typical of integral nationalism. A "technology of governance" serves to disguise an internal social crisis bought on, of course, by weighty foreign political conflicts.

Despite the fact that both historic forms of nationalism were born of different conditions, meeting different tasks, they are linked by a single common denominator — both forms are responses to a crisis of political participation, distribution and control of power. They are an expression of a conflict of struggles for building a new social infrastructure and institutions, being a sign of the crisis of economic development. Integral nationalism, as a political ideology, addresses that part of the society which is feeling "humiliated and offended", while understanding itself to be the substance of national existence. The natural national feeling, as the natural need to belong somewhere, is changed into a reactionary ideology with the ambition of integrating the society and excluding therefore everything "strange".

Specificity of Nationalism in Central Europe

Regarding nationalism and its signs in Central Europe, George Schöpflin underlines its cultural roots, which differentiate it from nationalism in West Europe. While linkage between the nation and the political power was clearly pronounced in West Europe and the idea of nation was accepted within the constitutional system, the situation in Central Europe was different. Borders of national states formed after the World War I were not in accord with the ethnic and national distribution of the population. In addition, there was a different function and mission of the intelligentsia. The intelligentsia of these regions controlled the political scene, as other social groups were too weak. This offered no alternative concepts to the visions which the intelligentsia prepared of the nation, which thereby was forced upon the entire society. Nationalism in Central Europe has a distinctly Messianic undertone calling for intellectual purity, which is not encountered in West Europe. The intelligentsia acting as spokesperson for its own nation has become a permanent component of the Central and East European political culture. Seemingly, a legitimate and attractive alliance between culture and politics has created a tradition where political

demands of an opponent are qualified through the optics of cultural nationalism as "strange and hostile". Relations between the nation and the state, the nation and democracy are purposefully misinterpreted.

Politics and Nationalism

Searching for national identity and its confirmation is, on the one hand, an understandable tendency after 40 years of the rule of a foreign ideology; but, on the other hand, as a political ideology which should integrate the society nationalism, bears within itself threats of integral nationalism. Traditional association between political and cultural demands causes a confusion within political life, as the national ideology changes into a tool of governance and manipulation in the hands of skillful demagogues. People exposed to a national ideology do not see that democratic political requirements, e.g. rights for freedom of information and assembly, cannot be derived from the requirement of national self-determination. The vacuum between the state and society, this threatening heritage of the recent past, creates a favorable framework for establishing a national egoism which requires subordination of the individual to the criterion of national interests. In the situation in which the social and economic impact of transformation upon the population induce strong frustration, when doubts are cast upon barely germinating democratic institutions, there is created an atmosphere which enables authoritative regimes to be formed.

The political task of the present seems to be to reestablish the credibility of the historic change of 1989 as a challenge to establish a new social treaty guaranteeing both security as well as higher social justice. However, it is not a task only of the political elite. As long as a society defines itself primarily as a national community integrated by a commonly shared value system, rather than by searching for rational solutions to existing issues, there is danger that the demons of nationalism will be revived again.

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Chapter X Difference, Identity and Politics

Egon Gál

The problem of identity is a new theme in the intellectual debates in East and Central Europe. It is argued that the old identities, which stabilized the social world for so long, are in decline. New identities are rising and destabilizing the individual as a unified subject. This so-called "crisis of identity" is a part of the process of change that is taking place in contemporary social and political life.

Identity becomes a problem whenever one is not sure where one belongs, where to place oneself in the narrations of the past, and in the network of interrelationships with others. It becomes a problem also when one is not sure whether others will accept this placement as correct. "Identity", wrote Z. Bauman, "is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty".

There are various situations in which one might ask the question of identity. It was asked in a letter submitted anonymously to Ahad Haam, the founder of a secular Jewish movement in 1947: "We call a Jew, one who loves his people, its literature, and its cultural heritage. . . . But the one who at the same time believes in nature and natural law, and does not believe in God, the creator, is such a person a Jew or isn't he?"¹

The question was asked also by the Lithuanian politician and historicist, B. Genzelis, in a paper submitted to the UNESCO Philosophy Forum in March this year: "What does it mean to be a citizen of the world or an European . . . and at the same time to be a Lithuanian, a Catholic, and a Social Democrat. . . . May a person be nothing, i.e. devoid of national and cultural identity, views and convictions?"²

Such questions as "Is he still a Jew or isn't he?" or "How is it possible to be a cosmopolitan and still remain a Lithuanian (or a Slovak)?" might be translated as "Who are we?", or "Is such a person still one of us or is he Other?" There are no fixed and unambiguous answers to these questions. The Other as well as the self are not stable and bounded entities that can be uncovered to secure and stabilize our sense of ourselves. Rather, they are subjects of the continuous play of history, culture, and politics.

It seems as if in the modern world some form of community such as nation, race, class, or gender to which we belong, or suppose ourselves to belong constitutes a part of our self-image. R. Scruton for example argues that: "The condition of man requires that the individual, while he exists and acts as an autonomous being, does so only because he can first identify himself as something greater — as a member of a group, class, or nation, or of some arrangement to which he cannot attach a name, but which he recognizes instinctively as a home."³ And, from a more liberal position, E. Gellner wrote: "That man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears is quite obvious, but not true".⁴

¹ *The Other in Jewish Thought and History*, ed., L.B. Silberstein, R.L. Cohn (New York: New York University Press, 1994), p. 1.

² B. Genzelis, "Cultural Monopoly and Cultural Provinces", *Les Recontres Philosophiques de UNESCO* (Paris, March 27-30, 1996).

³ R. Scruton, "Authority and Allegiance", J. Donald and S. Hall, eds., *Politics and Ideology* (Open University Press, 1986).

⁴ A. Gellner, *Národy a nacionalizmus* (Praha: Hríbal, 1993).

This is a paradoxical feature of identity. It is obvious that everybody has to have it, but we do not have it as we have noses and ears. It has to be re-invented and re-interpreted in each new situation, by each generation and each community. It does not pass from generation to generation by teaching and learning. If institutionalized and taught, it easily makes people chauvinist and exclusionist. In short a sense of identity is transmitted less through cognitive language or learning than through imagination and fantasy.

Othering and exclusion are always parts of the process of identity formation. Alterity is something like a screen for imagination on which the Other is projected, and over and against whom we form our sense of self.

In modern Europe the difference between identity and alterity is translated into cultural and national differences. A logic was developed according to which cultural differences define the sites of political conflicts. "We are the culture of conflict", wrote G. Vattimo, "Our identity lies precisely in the process of continuous de-identification and re-identification, taking place in conflicts". The problem we are facing in Europe today is how to come to terms with this diversity so that identity and alterity will complement, rather than exclude, each other.

It was supposed by some that the solution of the problem could be the establishment of alienated political institutions. These would be formal and empty enough to maintain their distance from claims of identity; they would not embody any particular community's dream, and thus keep open the space for them all. Only if the term "citizen" denotes an empty place, in the network of interrelationships between people, a place which can be occupied by anyone, may a citizen be imagined as a subject of the proclamation of human rights, "all people without regard to race, sex, religion, wealth, or ethnicity". But, as S. Zizek reminds us, we failed to notice "the violent act of abstraction at work in this 'without regard to'".⁵

Why then is the nation or ethnicity the best candidate to fill the empty space? Perhaps Scruton and Genzelis are right. A person simply cannot be devoid of local identity, traditions, views and convictions. Perhaps an individual can exist only when he can identify himself as a member of some "we". But it is also true that this identification is always the work of belief, of fantasy instead of cognition.

To believe in nation means, wrote S. Zizek, to believe that I am not alone, that I am a member of a community of believers. Each belief has its causes and effects; but the paradoxical feature of some beliefs is that they are caused by their own effects. Unifying ideas and unifying symbols are causes of this kind. They exist only insofar as people believe in their existence. To believe in a common thing (in an idea that unifies us) means to be a member of the community of believers in the same thing. But what is the thing we all believe? Be it either religion, or nation or money, always it is a substantiation of some habit to behave. "The others" are those who are dangerous for our habits of behaviour and way of life, but rather than real beings they are constructs of fantasy. This is the pathological aspect of our contemporary intellectual and political situation: the imaginary Other determines the way we act toward the real Other.

The Slovak sociologist, Pavol Fri, described a new mythology that has arisen during the last few years in South Slovakia, where a mixed community of Slovaks and Hungarians long coexisted without problems. One of the myths created there is a that of the "lurking evil". It consists of stories of sudden, almost unbelievable changes, on the one hand, of a hardworking Hungarian peasant into a hateful chauvinist, and, on the other hand, of a peace-loving Slovak into a zealous assimilator. Lurking in the background of these stories, wrote Fri, is always a more or less clearly

⁵ S. Zizek, *Looking Awry* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), p. 163.

expressed fear of irredentism, on the one side, or forced assimilation, on the other.⁶ As if small nations in Europe were left only with two possibilities: either tribalism with all its problems, or assimilation.

It was assumed that multiculturalism was a good starting point for a politics which is neither exclusivist nor assimilativist. According to the liberal reading, multiculturalism was understood as an expression of the anti-racist idea that there are no superior or inferior races, no superior or inferior cultures. There are only various traditions, various ways of organizing social life, each of equal value, and each worth preserving, if there is a community of people to identify with.

In many parts of contemporary Europe, however, the neo-conservative and exclusivist reading prevails. In this the national and ethnic tensions, the ethnic purification in Bosnia and Hercegovina, or the rages of skinheads in Germany, have to be seen as perverted and maybe pathological expressions of a real problem, namely that in the contemporary world the experience of belonging to a well-defined ethnic community, which gives meaning to an individual life, has lost ground. The true culprits are cosmopolitan liberals who force races and cultures to mix and thereby set in motion natural self-defence mechanisms.

The problem with multiculturalism, in either the liberal or the conservative interpretation, is that it reduces differences to different identities. It neglects the fact that even under the conditions of cultural and national differences political goals are selected more by interests than by cultural values.

If democracy is conceived primarily as a process of expressing ones preferences and interests, and registering them by vote; if the goal of democratic policy-making is to decide what leaders, rules, and politics will best serve the majority of people, then democracy seems to be a legitimate tool for oppressing the minority and the weak.

The balance of competing political and economic interests cannot be reached merely by tolerance or recognition of the other. It can come about only as a result of reflection, compromise and the choice of the lesser evil between competing parties.

The deliberative model of democracy proposed recently by J. Habermas and his followers conceives of democracy:

as a process that creates a public, citizens coming together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions. Democratic processes are oriented around discussing the common good rather than competing for the promotion of the private good of each. Instead of reasoning from the point of view of a private utility maximizer, through public deliberation citizens transform their preferences according to public-minded ends, and reason together about the nature of those ends and the best means to realize them.⁷

A primary virtue of deliberative democracy, as argued by its defenders, is that it promotes a conception of reason over power in politics. Politics ought to be adopted not because the most powerful interests win, but because the citizens or their representatives together determine their rightness after hearing and criticizing reasons.

The deliberative model of democracy emphasizes the mutual co-dependence of people belonging to different cultures or nationalities, inhabiting the same habitus. It emphasizes that

⁶ *Counter-proof. The Examination of the Slovak-Hungarian Relationship*, ed. by P. Huník (Bratislava: NAP Press, 1995).

⁷ I.M. Young, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy" in S. Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 121.

people's ideas about political questions often change in communication with other people's ideas and experiences. If in public discussions about collective actions or public policy people simply say what they want without any claim to justice and rightness, they will not be taken seriously. Instead they must appeal to others by presenting arguments that others ought to accept.

But, as M. Walzer noted, argumentation is possible only on the background of "shared understanding". The problem is that in contemporary differentiated societies we cannot assume that there is sufficient shared understanding to be appealed to in situations of conflicting interests. The problem with the deliberative model is how to argue exclusivists into being inclusivists, or nationalists into being democrats by finding the understanding they share. Political interests and values that stand in conflict with each other without prospect of consensus can not be balanced through ethical discourses.

The problem, as I see it, is how to separate the talk on political rights from the talk on "identity", "cultural differences" and "the Other". Neither tolerance nor acceptance of the other can be institutionalized. They cannot exist independently from the way people perceive themselves and others. But neither can political rights exist only as a grace, as something extended by someone to the other by arbitrary good will.

Only the politics of identitylessness inherent in the proclamation "all people without regard to . . ." makes it possible to mediate the social relations between people by law. Only this allows their desires to be articulated as rights and the wrongs to be assessed as injustices. Only by creating new habits and attitudes, by gradually changing the way people perceive themselves and others can diversity be made the source of mutuality, rather than of conflict.

Chapter XI

The Ambiguity of Nationalism

Jana Balázová

The end of the 20th century has witnessed great struggles for identity throughout the world. The most widespread effort is the search for national identity, which seems to be the basic human identity for most people. Identification with a particular nation serves as the basis for a fulfilled human existence, providing security, possibilities for personal development, and defence against real or imagined dangers and enemies.

The nation is an invention of modern times. The French Revolution at the end of the 18th century gave birth to the idea of nationhood which has spread over Europe and finally throughout the world, up to the end of the 20th century. At this point the existence of nations is a fact. Humanity is divided into nations, and people tend to forget that the nations to which they belong were not here from the beginning.

This common state of mind is very paradoxical, because we witness the historical nature of nations: the birth of new nations, their struggle for recognition, for respect and for space among the other already constituted nations. The fundamental struggle of a nation over a long history, with roots firmly established in history, is its best legitimation.

However, the basic concepts of nation used frequently by the common people, politicians and even theoretists are not clear; it is very difficult to define nation, and impossible to come to an agreement to use some obligatory definition. The meaning of terms follows from the attitudes of their users; it is the result of the goals, intentions and desired evidence which shapes the content of the particular concept. There are as many definitions of nation, nationality, nationalism because there are fundamentally different attitudes towards their real bases. Their explanation remains a matter of dispute, with no end foreseeable in the near future. Because of the many different components which form the basis of their definition, e.g., ethnic, cultural, political, territorial and economic, the nation is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon.

Definitions differ according to the fundamental characterizations of the defined phenomenon, each depending on a limited set of components with a prevailing value: there are cultural, psychological, ethno-linguistic or voluntaristic definitions. To be closest to the nature of the analyzed phenomenon one needs to take account of all of its components. From this point of view the definition invented by A.D. Smith seems to be the most precise, covering the largest number of components of the concept: a nation is a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy, and common legal rights and duties for all members.¹

The idea of modern nations is only about 200 years old, but every single nation tries to discover roots very deep in history, and if possible in very ancient and heroic history. This psychological aspect of the phenomenon seems to be as important for members of the particular community as is the fact of the existence of the nation itself, especially in those parts of the world where traditions prevail. History is the most important factor in creating the nation itself. Real or invented, myths and an historic sense of territory — all belonging to the psychological dimension

¹ A.D. Smith, *National Identity* (Penguin Books, 1991), p. 14.

of the phenomenon — are preserved, sheltered, discovered, revitalized, or even invented in the creation of strong, sound national feelings on the part of the members of each particular nation.

Nationalism and the concept of nation are very difficult to define, though very frequently they have been matters for serious analyses. They are held by people of various orientations and points of view, with various final aims in sight. All those factors influence the explanation. The one thing on which most scholars can agree is that it is a truly modern phenomenon.

Even now, after long debates, it is hard to say what came first: nation or nationalism. There are many attitudes towards this problem beginning from the nation as a product of divine creation to the nation as an invention of nationalism. As a fully voluntary act of people sharing in common partial or general aims a nation manifests the feelings of its people.

Without regard to the weaknesses or strengths of nationalism, there are many differences regarding the phenomena used as a bases of particular definitions. Generally speaking — together with A.D. Smith — the term nationalism has been used to signify these particular phenomena:

1. the process of forming and maintaining nations or nation-states;
2. consciousness of belonging to a nation, together with sentiments and aspirations regarding its security and prosperity,
3. language and symbolism of the 'nation' and its role,
4. ideology, including a cultural doctrine of nations and the national will, and prescriptions for the realization of national aspirations and will,
5. social and political movements to achieve the goals of the nation and realize the national will.²

- E. Kedourie's definition is based on the idea that nationalism is "a method of teaching the right determination of the will (for national self-determination)."³

- E. Gellner asserts that "It is nationalism which engenders nations . . . using the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and most often transforms them radically."⁴

- H. Kohn's concept of nationalism stresses its psychological side, underlining the fact that it is an ideology: "Nationalism is a state of mind . . . it is an idea, an *idée-forcé*."⁵

- A.D. Smith's definition of nationalism "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'."⁶

At the core of nationalism as an ideological doctrine lies the presupposition that the humanity of the world is divided naturally into nations. Nations are characterized as individuals with their own history and future, usually described as destiny. It is often said that men can reach real freedom and fulfil their goals only if they identify with a nation. Very often it is said that every other nation different from one's own is an enemy who tries to oppress them and reduce their rights. The rhetoric of nationalism relies upon the idea that the peace and security of the world is

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³ E. Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Blackwell, 1993), p. 76.

⁴ A.D. Smith, p. 64.

⁵ *Nationalism*, ed. by J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith (Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 162.

⁶ A.D. Smith, p. 73.

the result of the freedom and security of every nation as a member of the world's great family of nations.

At the end of the 18th century there was a special chance to establish a new social order and at that time human communities of a new type were established — it was the springtime of the nations. The whole world was in turmoil and as a result nations divided humanity. There was a chance to find one's identity, to be a member of particular community of people sharing the same socio-historical features. A feeling of common destiny rooted in ancient history and reaching far into the future spread over greater social groups. This generated a feeling of security.

E. Kedourie writes that nationalism takes for granted that humanity is divided into nations. He sees the strength of nationalism in creating possibilities for men to declare their identity, to join some particular community and to share its fortunes. The real nature of this doctrine lies in the affirmation "that men have the right to stand on their differences from others . . . and to make these differences their first political principle."⁷ There, in communities of people which share a common destiny, men have the chance to fight against the most important problems which weigh upon them: oppression, alienation, and impoverishment of the spirit. Nationalism as an ideology has these concerns as its very basis. It is a strong weapon for overcoming oppressive problems present in the daily life of men. The means are the network of membership relations in the sphere of nationhood. If the nation is strong and secure, and abundant in the material and spiritual spheres, all its members are strong and secure, rich materially and spiritually. Undoubtedly, this bright picture of one's life is too attractive to abandon.

"The total demand which nationalism makes on the individual originates . . . in solicitude for his freedom. Real freedom . . . is a particular condition of the will which, once attained, ensures the lasting fulfillment of the individual and his bliss."⁸ But, alas, nationalism is far from the reality, and not only in this special case. If it requires too much from contemporaries it would be a great gain for their descendants.

According to A.D. Smith's definition nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the autonomy, unity and identity of a nation. But there are two sides to the problem, which is rooted in a basic demand and goal of nationalistic efforts, that is, a demand for a nation-state. One very positive side speaks about the efforts to achieve the welfare of a nation and of every member. This is an intra-national point of view. On the other side, because in a nation-divided world there must be relations among nations which create this picture of the world, every nation must have international affairs and relationships which engage in some way the members within the community. At best, relations with other nations are indifferent but there is also latent hostility, as in the case of sound competition with other nations; this underlines their uniqueness and exceptionality. Somewhere in the background the effort to show disabilities of eventual enemies can be seen.

Intra-nationally, nationalism can produce happiness and spiritual fulfillment, accompanied with material prosperity; it can lead to a strong feeling of sympathy for others within the nation; it can invoke the best in them and gives them a chance to show it. But, on the contrary, it can produce psychic oppression, feelings of misery and misconceived ideals if the goals are too remote and the present too gloomy.

Inter-nationally, nationalism can provide "a remedy" for that "sickness". It is a very simple and well-tried remedy. The agents responsible for all failures, for that unbearable misery — whether in the material or spiritual sphere, are somewhere outside. It orients members of a nation

⁷ E. Kedourie, p. 74.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

toward finding the enemy responsible for all the failures in their lives outside the community. If the actual situation is nearly unbearable, nationalism provides a stronger remedy — there is a really hostile enemy somewhere outside and distrust and hatred towards it create a mist which covers real problems. The deeper the problems the deeper the roots of the hostility sought. Nationalism uses history, whether real or invented, to legitimize its maintenance of distrust and hatred within the community towards "hostile" neighbors. An ancient "history" and/or popular myths are the sources of nationalistic ideas, heroic examples which are to initiate a new heroic age of the nation.

Although nationalism cannot be confused with patriotism or with xenophobia, they are so closely connected that in the practical daily life of a nation state they merge together. Love of a nation is replaced with loyalty to a state; excessive emphasis upon potential dangers from outside leads to xenophobia and the total isolation of the community.

It is very significant that from this source arise both positive ideas which can develop the best in an individual and feelings of hatred and distrust which can create a dangerous mass. Undoubtedly, historically rooted hostilities were and still are the starting point for crises, or at worst armed conflict among nations. Paradoxically, in the name of the freedom of one's nation men lose their lives and those of their relatives, endangering the freedom and existence of a nation.

E. Kedourie asserts that nationalism on behalf of an idea of perfection not only creates a strict borderline between the real and the ideal, but in the end rejects life so that freedom vanishes in death. He admits that it is impossible to predict the result of any such an ideological movement pushing masses to act under the stress of "great" ideas. One can analyze only events which have happened. The contemporary situation provides evidence that nationalism cannot be, and is not, a "remedy" for those problems; it cannot bring repose, welfare and peace for everybody. Unfortunately, nationalism substitutes disorder for order, which is an alarming fact given the very fragile structure of the contemporary world.

Nationalism is a selfish, deaf and blind ideology, which sacrifices the lives of those whom it seemingly protects. The nation and, closely connected with it, nationalism are historical phenomena with a relatively short lifetime. Though national identity is very important for the lives of individuals and nationhood is now proving to be very vivid and of ultimate importance, just as it had its beginning it will have its end. It is a product of social and idealistic developments, and will be replaced with another human development. The nation is a part of being human, and as a part it may not be identified with the whole. It is a negation of the individual, not one's fulfillment. The rejection of one's individual life and the lives of masses on both sides of strictly drawn borderlines between nations tends to a negation of humanity.

H. Kohn warns against an excessive emphasis of nationalism and uses the example of fascism: "the uncompromising enemy of Western civilization, (which) has pushed nationalism to its very limit, to a totalitarian nationalism, in which humanity and the individual disappear and nothing remains but the nationality, which has become the one and the whole."⁹

The age of nationalism, as well as ages which are the milestones in the development of human beings, promises to have its end in the future. Like other ages, that of nationalism has characteristics which make it both a positive acquisition for the development of human society and a negative one as well. In the last two centuries nationalism has prevailed over alternative forms of identity. It is still a strong, vivid ideology which guides men to act. Apparently, it is so strong that it can result not only in an effort to discover and attain the best in men, but in a rejection of others' principles, reducing them to "enemies".

⁹ *Nationalism*, p. 163.

The end of the 20th century witnesses an emerging struggle between two alternative ideas which have shaped attitudes towards the problem of identity. One is the idea of nationality, the other is that of citizenship. Whether the idea of nationality actually results in emphasizing the community of men which is named "a nation" and the rights and duties of men derive from the status of "a nation", the idea of citizenship emphasizes the rights and duties of men as individuals. National identity is replaced there with an individual one. Theoretically, the idea of citizenship seems to provide a greater range of rights for individual identity, but it only begins to do so. There are too many prejudices against it in the practical political sphere, notwithstanding serious attempts to bring it to life. Whether it works or not, it offers a possible way to overcome the limitations of a humanity shaped simply into nations.

Chapter XII

Towards a Culture of Uncertainty and Venture

František Novosád

The notion of ideology, already long-obsolescent in the West, has become moribund even in ex-communist regions. It is safe to say that ideology, as a programmatic representation that conceals much more than it reveals and displaces things whenever it seeks to display them, seems to be on its last legs. Its demise heralds the advent of a new culture of venture in the ever changing real world.

The term *ideology* is patently modern; it has been coined to signify something hitherto unprecedented or at least unperceived. It makes its first appearance merely as another label for something old, which might well have been but a ruse of history. Destutte de Tracy coined the term *ideology*, for a science concerned with the investigation of the provenance of our abstractions and ideas. Since then the term has been part of our standard vocabulary, though its meaning has gone through a number of drastic changes.

The general public was first exposed to the term *ideology* by Napoleon Bonaparte when he referred to the critics of his strategies as *idéologues*, meaning by the label producers of ideas and words backed by no real force. It was not an off-hand verbal improvisation, but revealed his physical frame of mind. Napoleon related, overtly and brutally, ideas to power. Not only was it a statement of a fact of life, it was his invention; from that time on, we have been almost inept in discriminating clearly between the power of ideas and the power that had mastered and controlled the idea. Since then, the maxim that ideas unbacked by battalions or with no material interests underpinning them are not to be taken seriously has been taken for granted. The suasive force and effectiveness of ideological pronouncements, therefore, have always to be maintained by power. The moment ideology loses endorsement by power it starts to shrink, shrivel, and look threadbare; it is no longer appealing or persuasive.

Napoleon was convinced that power is prone to be arrogant and hence easygoing and banal. He could unmistakably sift viable ideas from the irrelevant and learned idle talk of the *cognoscenti*. In this case, one of his admirers, viz., J. W. Goethe, most neatly conveyed the essence of ideologies as hardly discernible from a phantom or mirage; nowadays we know only too well that they are phantasies and mirages under realization. The history of ideologies can be recounted in several versions, but none can go by without reference to K. Marx, V. I. Lenin, and F. Nietzsche.

Karl Marx used the term *ideology* exclusively in critical contexts: for him, it meant a false consciousness and illusions generated by our social circumstance. It was also thought unable to reflect on its own assumptions, thought which reckons itself to be autonomous and is unable to recognize its own dependence on tangible interests. Against ideology (morality, religion, and metaphysics), there stand science and critical thinking. But Marxism forgot the critical dimension and the requirement to clearly separate science from ideology. Instead it began to take its ideology as science.

For all that nobody can be sure if stringent discrimination between ideology and science would have led to other outcomes than those brought about by their nondiscrimination. We can perceive only a turn or mutation of the meaning, a metamorphosis of the critical concept into an affirmative

one. This seemingly minor change in the nearing of the term ideology is a reaction to the problem of modern societies, namely, that of the legitimacy of their existence.

Modern society, or, in Marx's phrase, the "bourgeois epoch", is distinguished by "endless breakthroughs in production, changes in all the social relations, eternal uncertainty and motion. All established and entrenched relations, together with the venerable old ideas and opinions tend to disintegrate; all the newly formed ones get outdated until they are ossified. Everything associated with status and hierarchy loses its sense, everything sacred is deconsecrated, and people, finally, are urged to look at their living conditions and their interaction with others with sensitivity."

One could hardly disagree with the first half of Marx's analysis of the modern life style: Weber and Aron, Maritain and Arendt have painted the same picture. However, the latter portion of Marx's portrayal of modern society is quite another matter. Nothing in the 19th and 20th century history gives evidence that people have been "urged to look at their living conditions . . . sensitively". Rather, the reverse. A strong historical case can be made that it is exactly the changeability and fluidity of modern society that have created such an urgent demand for comforting illusions, for surrogate realities, for idols as well as for charismatic ideas and personalities.

It is quite possible that it is easier to come to terms with incessant uncertainty and mutability when the situation is assessed rationally. However, it may seem more manageable for a person whose perspective has been blurred. Fuzziness of vision could make things look not enjoyable if actually they are not so, but certainly more bearable.

Yet, however illusory, this need for certainty, is so urgent that one can hardly avoid it even by its surrogates. This is joined with the fact that nothing is given in modern society, but that every minute something new is produced there, which is why moderns are repeatedly urged to distinguish the possible from the real, or the possible from the permissible. Technology has increased remarkably the power of humans over the circumstances of their lives: nature has become an "object" and society an "organization". The human person — who stands always for an organized group of people — has at his disposal infinitely effective means. What has been lost or challenged, however, are the goals, criteria and norms.

In traditional philosophy that is, ancient and medieval philosophy, reality antecedes possibilities both logically and factually. Only against the backdrop of this thesis on the relationship between possibilities and reality does a human begin to be looked at as a practical and social being.

Modernity has drastically reversed the traditional relationship construed in terms of the Aristotelian scheme. Man comes to view himself as a creative and self-creating being, as a being of possibilities. Action is no more perceived as reproduction, but as production and experimentation. To act for a modern man means to experiment, that is, to perceive the real primarily against the background of the possible. But the possible is no more mere background; piecemeal it has come to be a yardstick for the real. Man ceases to define himself in terms of his limitations and begins to do so in terms of his possibilities. A possibility, however, has to be articulated, and one who has come to construe himself as a sovereign being can only fill the sphere of the possible with his own phantasies, products of his own imagination, that is, with ideologies.

Hence ideologies are a new phenomenon and are not encountered as such earlier than modern, and permanently modernizing, societies. Ideologies are a quest for certainty in the world of incessant metamorphoses, an attempt to articulate ends where everything has been turned into means. In a world of endless changes and burgeoning possibilities, traditional instruments of

orientation and traditional views of the world are of no avail: one can no longer to empire rely on what is traditionally handed down; religions, too, have lost much of their power.

It is exactly into this space, vacant after the retirement of traditions and further expanded by the enhancement of the sphere of the disposable, that ideologies sandwich themselves as the ever multiplying phantasies and mirages once referred to by J. W. Goethe.

It is commonly assumed that ideologies are ideas that have placed themselves completely at the service of power as its tool and voice -- in a word, they become an eye of power. That, however, is only one aspect of their being. Another more hidden and perhaps much more threatening, is the ability of ideologies to construct the sphere of the possible, to define reality and to suggest ends and grounds where there are sheer means and causes.

Ideologies would offer a solution to the structural crisis of modern society by substantiating its legitimacy and articulating the sense and grounds of its existence. By now, however, we have learned that we cannot attain everything we seem to need. We do know that many problems, perhaps the most urgent, are simply insoluble. We have to join the rest of the world in pursuit of a culture of suspended problems, proliferating uncertainties and attendant ventures. There is an ever growing awareness of the inevitability of living amidst the myriad of unmet challenges. It is the awareness that as a cure ideologies are worse than an incurable disease. People now speak of the eclipse of the age of ideologies.

American sociologist, Daniel Bell, in the mid-50s suggested that one of the characteristics of our society was that we were living at the "end of ideology". Much has happened since, with multiple ebbs and flows of ideologisation and disideologisation, during which Bell's thesis has been - practically and theoretically - now refuted and then confirmed. But even a hasty glance at the ideological landscape of the last thirty years will convince that the ups have been weaker than the downs. Today, it looks like we have indeed reached the point of the "end of ideology". Ideologies have fallen into disrepute in very practical and visible terms; they lack even the strength to explain their own demise.

The decomposition of ideologies, nonetheless, is by no means a simple and perspicuous process. It can claim at least as much sophistication as was involved in the ideologies themselves and their social and psychological functions. Much has been lumped therein: a universal program for the "change of the world", a promise of social salvation, articulation of social resentments, the formulation of group interests, and global interpretations of the socio-historical world intermediately traceable to interests. Almost nothing remains of all this. Major current political trends no longer define themselves in terms of what they would like to attain, but what they would be happy to avoid. A social heaven is no longer an end; avoidance of a social hell has taken its place. We have come to be more vigilant so that discontent and intergroup rivalry should not arise.

Yet, something persists: group interests, a need to draw the line between the possible and the permissible, to endow the course of social events with a sense that can be grasped, a need for grand interpretations of the world, literal or symbolic.

Interests are omnipresent as well as the need for their articulation and symbolic packaging. There is also an inherited need for the imposition of clear meaning upon the fluid, fugitive, changing or in a word, unguaranteed reality. This is a need to make the world accessible through rational accounts. So far, these three drives have easily been harnessed to yield the explosive composite of a promise of social salvation.

Today we know better and try to meet these exigencies in separation from one another. We try to dissociate the picture of the world from corporate interests as well as not to slide into a universalization of multiple and multifarious interests. We let ourselves be led by our limitations,

rather than our possibilities. The demise of ideology, then, suggests many things: it means abandoning the niche of imaginary space and exposing ourselves to harsher realities, uncertain and almost chaotic. For many, the end of ideology means an eyeball to eyeball encounter with the void itself.

The response to this situation is a strategy of swinging between two extremes: an endeavor to accept reality as it comes along with all its uncertainty, fragmentation and incompleteness, on the one hand, and efforts to master it in one sweeping "survey" of the whole of history, on the other. The latter conjures up the aspired sense, if at the price of finding ourselves once again enclosed in the safety and quiet of a figment of the imagination and prostrate at the feet of a new idol.

The world of uncertainties and improvisations, of deterred and segregated descriptions, explanations, and evaluations will inevitably nurture nostalgias for a world of security, for grand and final decisions, one of single truth in a marriage of life and knowledge. This nostalgia will be the main generator of ever new -- though, it is hoped, ever weaker -- upsurges of ideology.

Today, an ideological void is a fact of life. Attempts to fill it with the ideas of yesteryear or even more remote historical ideologemes are badly off target. A return to pre-1989 reality is not inviting, even less to still distant history: one cannot enter twice into the same river. Whatever the distortions, society has yet been developing and now faces ostensibly different problems than in the past. The prospect of articulating new issues in old symbolism appears to be a mistaken way to fill the ideological void.

Can one ever learn the art of living in an environment of interpretative and ideological deficit? Is it possible to learn and adopt patterns of behaviour responsive to the new culture of uncertainty entailing the cult of venture? Can we live and try to be happy in a world we know but very imperfectly and within which we cannot feel safe? It is a sign of maturity, with reference to both societies and people, that they are able to live and meet their goals amidst a pervasive fuzziness relying on no neatly pre-packaged ideological socio-political *Gestalten*. Thus, it is essential that we should not succumb to any self-imposed pseudo-solutions; rather let us remain with the substantive, the rationally identifiable and what can be expressed articulately.

Chapter XIII

Environmental Thinking and Social Transformation

Eva Smolková

One of the most important processes taking place in the framework of present philosophical thinking is an effort to accept the relation between the human being and the environment and to recognize the value of such structures. This value had been absent in ethical systems heretofore or at least had been unattended to so that it had not been articulated in specific ethic norms. In the past decade environmental ethics has attempted to outline, elaborate and justify such norms and, to some extent, to make them function.

The Environmental Problem

In that period, an environmental ethics has become a recognized trend in philosophical reflection. It is characterized by a concrete, specific method of considering reality and focuses on ethical relations among people and the surrounding environment taken in the broadest sense of the word, i.e., the world of nature, ecosystems and the planet Earth. It consists in the process of discovering the ethical character of the relations between people and their natural environment, and especially the corresponding reorientation of social values. This article will focus only on the process of social changes regarding environmental needs and will propose and develop methods that can be applied in this framework. In the process of democratization a group called "Nature and Union Landscape Protectors" has been influential in drawing attention to these concerns, and their formulation of the issue will be taken as a starting point.

In democratic societies during the past decades much attention has been devoted to investigating the possibilities of harmonizing the relations of human beings to the environment and to specifying what this means in terms of responsibility and duty towards the natural environment. In this endeavor, the search for socially acceptable norms of behaviour towards nature as an environment for humans as well as for plants and animals was one of the most difficult and problematic tasks.

The process was not only one of searching out the various dimensions of an organic relation between the environment and human beings. In democratic societies it was also a matter of finding its expression and support or acceptance by democratic principles, and creating adequate (even specific) space for this. This process included many projects, scientific works, drafts and proposals, all with a number of variations. The plurality of opinions meant among other things a broad research forum for investigating the reasons for the state of affairs, as well as possibilities for modifying the related value orientations on the individual and social level. The axiological and ethical conceptions were created gradually and shaped through discussion. This process took more than three decades.

Historically, this process of accepting environmental values meant also reorienting social values to take them into account on two levels: the theoretical-ethical and the practical-ethical (after which come the legal and the legislative). The first should logically precede the second, but this is not necessarily valid in certain revolutionary situations and processes in a time of fundamental transformations in social, property and legal relations. This is especially so as access

to the related philosophical work previously have been limited or even artificially prevented by a totalitarian regime during that period.

In the former Czechoslovakia this sort of ethical reflection was placed beyond the legal limit and most controversial projects calling attention to the environmental situation and the need to modify ethical norms of behaviour towards nature were *a priori* rejected by the governing power. In spite of that, since the year 1982 a number of influential studies emerged. There were, for example, the analysis of eight deadly sins by Lorenz, the early studies of the Club of Rome by Meadows and others, and concrete analyses mapping the situation of the environment originating from the Slovak Union of Nature and Landscape Protectors. All these resulted in some publication of analyses of basic concerns and the first materials from the Club of Rome were made available throughout the Slovak Union. They served to mobilize broad public concern¹ and to trace the gradual degradation of environment to its sources in the failure to acknowledge the value of the relation between human beings and the environment.²

The Emergence of Environmental Theory

The process of social transformation to a democratic society supposed a change in the outlook on human behaviour with regard to the *oikos* from the moral point of view. However, the absence of a theoretical-scientific basis for an environmental ethics, the lack of clarity regarding the principles of an environmental market economy or "green" economy on which to base the elaboration of a complete politico-economic response, played a negative role in the form of the lack of a theoretical interpretational framework for ecological morals. The total or partial absence of theoretical solutions for the problems had practical consequences in slowing the elaboration of concrete plans for reform and the development of practical environmental ethics and green politics.

Nevertheless, these began to be constituted within the framework of the democratization process in Czechoslovakia — which was among the first³ and one of the most successful. It was not realistic to suppose that the democratization process would bring quick acceptance of these environmental needs identified during the last years of the totalitarian regime. Nevertheless, an environmental value priority in the process of transformation was set up and even declared constitutionally ([11], II. head, 6th paragraph, articles 44 and 45, and III. head, 1st paragraph, article 55).

¹ In the framework of organization No. 6 in Bratislava, cooperation on projects began in 1982, that resulted in the internal publications *Bratislava/Loudly* and *Slovakia/Loudly*, directed to protectors, enthusiasts and activists with the goal of changing the politics of protection. See *After-November Slovakia I-II* (Bratislava, 1994), p. 3.

² The first survey of public thinking after November, 1989 signaled that more than 50 percent of Slovak inhabitants considered solving environmental problems to be a priority. See *After-November Slovakia III*, investigation "Environment as a Value", pp. 82 and 93.

³ Mikulát Huba mentions that the revolutionary VPN was born of concerns with the human, management and material-technical basis of the environmental protection movement. M. Huba, "About a Chance to Reorient Slovakia onto the Way of Permanent Sustainability". In *After-November Slovakia I-II* (Bratislava, 1994), p. 8. Many initiators of *Bratislava/Loudly* began to participate in constituting the Party of Greens, to search for a political expression of the protection idea. The ethical dimension of the problems practically supplanted the political. Establishment of the second part created a functional non-governmental organization of Green Peace and *Sloboda zvierat* (Peace of Animals) which dealt with certain concrete projects.

In this situation the search for answers to questions of whether there should be an ethical norm of ecological morals, what are the criteria of environmental behaviour and why they should be constituted in this way rather than another has only begun. However, without clear theoretical ideas, this task is not only problematic, but almost unsolvable. To overcome the problems requires becoming familiar with the main ideas and accomplishments which over the past three decades have called attention to the existence and character of the global problems. This is the philosophical starting-point for changes in the world.

However, the lack of theoretical preparation for the shift which took place in the framework of the democratization process with regard to the responsibility for the state of the environment has appeared as the most problematic area. Responsibility shifted from a sole political subject which had controlled society, to several subjects participating in the power. This made it necessary to develop responsibility on the part of the market with regard to ecological needs.⁴ For lack of legislative norms it was necessary to begin in terms of personal consciousness and axiological individualism and from there to develop principles for a business and managerial ethic sensitive to ecological needs. This led to the number of fruitless discussions, which disadvantaged the Greens who gradually were coming into conflict with market concerns.⁵

Insufficient theoretical readiness not only for the process of transformation, but even for some of its incidental negative characteristics made mutual communication more difficult among individual trends and organizations for environmental protection. Lack of communication and the ensuing conflicts with a high level of conviction added to the insufficient theoretical basis to gradually split the argumentation into various trends.⁶

Much has changed: the possibilities and conditions, the starting principles, most of the factors about which this specific type of reflection began, and the forms and methods of disseminating environmental ideas. Because this began in 1989, many of these conceptions which had concerned Western European and American thinkers during the 70s and 80s — for example the conception of the zero growth by Meadows, the critique of Christian anthropocentrism and the ensuing discussion — did not have so significant an influence on the environmental reflection in our country. But, given that there is an inevitable sequence in the development of structures and therefore difficulty in speeding up individual steps, a certain delay especially in the field of practical environmental ethics and its influence on professional ethics was to be expected.

However, the specifics of development implied the need to search out alternatives for solving the economic problems in the transformation, i.e. to become oriented among the economic-environmental conceptions of Permanently Sustainable Development and the Permanently Sustainable Life. More intuitively than consciously, and even before the revolution and the

⁴ Doubts regarding this work ensue from the fact that these mechanisms were formed in the situation in which legislation securing a certain level of ecological responsibility practically did not exist and the operative supposition was: What is not explicitly prohibited is allowed.

⁵ In the first post-revolutionary period it was not possible unambiguously to determine the representatives of the individual political trends OF and VPN, because these movements had not yet clarified their identity and so were fused to some extent. However, the protectors and the Greens were the initiators of democratization in the process of the transformation though at the beginning their influence was not so significant.

⁶ It is obvious that the situation was conditioned by many events among which the absence of a theoretical basis for environmental ethics was but one. There were also problems of civil society, of morality and of legality. As another example besides those mentioned is the influence of nationalistic ideas as well (at the time of the so-called conflicts about competencies in the CSFR in 1991 and 1992), when a section of the Party of Greens was separated and a Party of Greens in Slovakia declared itself.

constitution of the Green Party, Permanently Sustainable Development was given priority, based on securing the needs of present humanity without limiting future generations from satisfying theirs.

The Emergence of an Environmental Movement

Only in the year 1994 did a group oriented toward ecocentrism and deep ecology separate out theoretically with the conception of Permanently Sustainable Life, the need to harmonize relations in nature with human beings as an organic part of nature. For this group, built around M. Huba (a founder of the Society for Permanently Maintainable Life in Slovakia), it is optimal not to interfere with nature at all. Such a narrow environmental attitude has a certain passivity due to the belief that it is possible to solve environmental problems by changing previous attitudes in terms of Fromm's distinction between 'to have', and 'to be'. In this view the ethical environmental norm is a compass to which one should adhere. This focuses on the individual's axiological and ethical attitude, which can be formed on sensitivity in one's contact with nature and further self-education.

However, the ethical norm of ecological morals must have some form if it is to begin to be asserted and to function in the framework of a practical and professional ethics (a business and managerial ethics, etc.) and to reflect real social values. Perhaps because in environmental ethics a number of trends exists, which extend ethical relations to other animal species as well (by P. Singer, T. Regan and others), or which extend the ethical process to the whole — ecosystems, biotic communities, or the planet (A. Leopold, J.B. Callicott, J.E. Lovelock and others) — it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that in the community there are different ideas about the values involved in environmental problems. Only part of them can acquire the function of moral normative rules that can be used to create some hypostasized, utilitarian idea of ecological security (the legal term) for a society as a whole. The ideas, which acquire a normative form only problematically or not at all, remain on the level of axiological individualism, so their acceptance depends on the choice and possibilities of individuals. However, it is illusory to think that in an axiological individualism everybody will realize their own responsibility and adhere to their opinion or that this will be the same or at least similar to opinions of other individuals in a society. Moral assessments are not only about the values of aims, for if agreement about concrete aims would provide the basis of moral opinions, moral rules, as we know them, would not be needed ([4], 154). It is moral norms and therefore moral rules that classify certain sorts of action.

Finally, one develops them not because one knows, but because one does not know, what all the consequences of concrete actions can and will be ([4], 153). In the environmental area (or in that of ecological security) a number of causal connections, relations and links do not have to be apparent and clear. Many environmentally responsibility polluting forms are not perceptible to the senses (radiation, electromagnetic waves of some wavelengths, toxic compounds in soil, water and air etc.); even rationally they are very difficult to judge if we have sufficient quantity of knowledge about them at all and enough good equipment to comprehend some specific changes such as the thinning of the ozone layer. At the same time, their consequences to the environment and the human population as well are out of sight. With the highest probability it is illusory to think that some ethical idea or axiological orientation will actively assert itself in an other than normative way, that is, without legal and legislative norms.⁷ Individual judgment regarding some realities can be based on a deep knowledge, i.e. with sufficient knowledge and ability to judge certain

⁷ Of course, there still exists an ideological declarative approach, in which an hypostasized idea is given a social value, as for example the value of labour in the socialist regime.

realities as rationally it is possible, or on an individual belief, religious belief, belief in traditional values, belief in ideological principles, etc. However, in such cases it is problematic to talk about an individual judging.

To start thinking about the conception of a balanced, sustainable economy (steady-state economy) ([2], 93 and following), based on the requirements of constant population and artifacts, optimal range of both and as low a throughput of substances and energy as possible, appears illusory in a period of economic transformation, in which many ethical market principles are absent. In spite of that, if we take into consideration all the standpoints and approaches now present in the environmentally concerned part of our society, we conclude that Daly's idea of maintaining balance in the economy represents a certain ideal, which all authors are concerned to reach though they choose different methods and means. The most pragmatic is the economic-environmental approach by B. Moldan [8]. There is social interest in the cultural-historical-value approach of J. Vavrousek [12] built on the need to return to traditional values, that (with the exception of the last forty years) had existed in this field and had been functional and functioning. The environmental approach by M. Huba [5] speaks to those perceiving a range of individual environmental responsibilities. The sociological-economical analysis of J. Keller about the social roots of the ecological crisis [6] is a significant contribution. The opinion gradually asserting itself is that waiting for the process of change to be completed and for enough resources for ecological projects (V. Klaus) in order to begin implanting green economic principles into democratic structures is not only undesirable and not well-founded, but from the point of view of forming a civil society in developing economies is not significant and is indeed short-sighted (see [13], 8-34). On the contrary, it is necessary to work as intensively as possible in order not to experience the bitter after-taste of having tried hard to reach an aim which was abandoned by the developed world, at the very time we were starting on the way towards it ([9], 5). The warranty for environmental security in democratic societies is created gradually and naturally as a part of both citizen and human rights. It is assumed to grow constantly. If the state cannot assure it sufficiently for the future, then movements for clean water, clean air and hygienic foodstuffs become the most important social advances for the future century.

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Chapter XIV

Environmental Decision Making in the Slovak Republic

Tatiana Kluvánková

One of the famous Czech eco-philosophers in his book *Shock from Ecology* said that in former socialist countries the basic idea of socialism — solidarity — was "privatized" by a select group of prominent individuals. As a matter of fact solidarity was reduced to the family level; individuals were trying to take as much as possible from "common property". Therefore any attempt to return this solidarity to society would be understood as "an extreme of socially unacceptable behavior." J. Keller, 1996

In socialist times, people acted predominantly on the basis of individual benefit without any need for communication or co-operation. Among other problems connected with economic decline, countries of the former communist block had to deal also with the revitalization of such deformed behaviour in society. Thus the question of new policies is not simply a matter of theoretical knowledge from the West and of their application to the national policies.

The inefficient policy instruments and incapability of the command and control (CAC) approach to decision making was a key contributor to the weakness of the environmental policy of the past regime. Decision making was done by political representation and based upon ideological or political symbolism, rather than upon economic criteria. Environmental decision making was limited mostly to a supplementary position in planning documents with very low flexibility and ability to influence the decision making process.

Political changes in 1989 and the consequent economic transformation have enabled changes in the environmental policies of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of the Environment, was established in 1990, and the Governmental Environmental Policy, the National Environmental Action Plan and several other documents and legal acts followed. Since any modern environmental policy is substantially connected with economic efficiency and the democratic decision making process, Slovak environmental policy has shifted towards the principle that "the polluter pays" and the public now participates in the decision making process.

In this context major legal changes and several new instruments have been implemented for a new environmental decision making process, shifting Slovak environmental policy from regulation towards incentives.

The Legal Framework and Existing Legal Practices

The most essential missing aspect in the former command and control approach was collective bargaining and consensus building, just as the major missing factor in the former regime was public involvement. Efficient public participation plays a vital role in the successful transformation of environmental policy towards efficiency and democracy.

In this context several new steps have been taken toward a new environmental decision making process. Specifically, the Environmental Impact Assessment Act (EIA) was adopted by the Slovak Republic on September 1, 1994. The purpose of the law is to provide a total technical and public evaluation of plans with a view to minimizing the environmental damage entailed by alternate solutions. The law determines the rules of this public participation with special emphasis

on supporting democratic and transparent decision making. Civil associations and initiatives representing the public could be created within the framework of the EIC. Under this law the public becomes one of the parties of the assessment process and the whole assessment process is provided as a comparison of alternative scenarios. However, it does not require an evaluation of the economic impact, and thus the efficiency of the alternatives is not taken into the consideration. Under the Slovak EIA law there is no right to appeal against the final decision within the EIA procedure, but only through the administrative procedure.

The basic rights of public participation are granted by the Constitution adopted by the National Council of the Slovak Republic in 1992 and by the Act of Basic Rights and Freedoms. According to these, citizens have the right to a healthy environment, to expression, to information, to free assembly, to association, and to petition. Public participation is also established by separate laws like the Act of Assembly Right, the Act of Association Right and the Act of Referendum.

The public of the Slovak Republic does not have the right to initiate legislation and to make rules directly. Under the Constitution only Committees of the National Council, Members of the Parliament and the Government may propose legislation to the National Council. The General Law of the Environment has several rather general provisions about access to information and participation. The law on the Municipality System grants citizens the right to participate in local decision making through voting for their local authorities and directly through public meetings. Citizens of the municipality have a right to vote in local referenda on important issues concerning community life as the mode of direct citizen participation to influence decisions in local issues.

Nor is standing very well developed in Slovakia; in practice, only affected parties or parties that prove an interest have this right, though there are some exceptions (EIA law). Another possibility is provided by administrative law and procedure. The administrative process, which involves decision making by administrative, as opposed to judicial, organs is the usual means for resolving matters of conflict regarding environmental law and protection. The administrative law has only subsidiary force; other laws may contain specific administrative provisions that supersede administrative law in related cases (Planning and Building, for instance). In the Slovak Republic there is no law guaranteeing access to information or freedom of information, though a draft has been prepared. There are decision making elements also within several other legal instruments: The Environmental Permit and Licensing Process, The Waste Law, The Clean Air Act, The Water Law, the Act on Land Use, Planning and Building Rules, etc.

Existing Practices and the Process of Implementation

The major legal accomplishment is a quite developed legislative framework for environmental decision making. On the other hand, implementation and law enforcement are still ineffective. Citizens as individuals are not very active in environmental decision making. Generally there is a lack of interest in public matters and quite a deal of apathy toward becoming involved in community life. The reasons flow partly from the command and control policies of the past, and partly from a lack of awareness and skills in the new democratic decision making process. But also they result from an underdeveloped institutional background and public society. The command and control approach still is frequently used by powerful parties involved in the conflict. The relationship between the government and NGOs in general has been one of opposition during the past years and has been far from satisfactory. There exist no proper channels for dialogue; exchange of information in general is based mostly on personal contacts. In this respect the

operation of the information law is critical, for access to information is not transparent for the public, non-governmental organizations or research institutions.

Decisions are taken mostly on administrative initiative, without sufficient involvement by all the parties involved. Any involvement of the public or other interested parties not presently in power takes place only in the later phases of the planning process when detailed proposals already exist and certain political preferences and interests are present and even invested in.

An example is the environmental financing system. Environmental goods are defined as nonexclusive and non-competitive, thereby constituting a substantial part of the public sector. As a matter of fact the democratic decision-making process should be transparent and accessible to the public. The principle that "the polluter pays" followed by most OECD countries has been adopted in the Slovak environmental policy. The costs of reducing ongoing pollution and meeting regulatory requirements are regarded as the responsibility of the polluter. At the same time the recovery process in CEE countries cannot take full advantage of this principle. Here, financing via the environmental fund can serve as a compromise.

The State Environmental Fund of the Slovak Republic (SEF-SR) is the most important environmental financing scheme of the Slovak Republic.¹ Founded in March 1991, it provides objective oriented subsidies on the basis of applications based on the following criteria: project documentation, building permits and the legal standpoint of the respective state authority. The fund contributes only to environmental problems of selected projects and support focuses mainly on local environmental problems (municipalities) or major industrial polluters. Priorities are given to the areas suggested by the Slovak environmental policy. Selection criteria and decision procedures are not transparent. The Supervisory Council is formed of 15 representatives, basically from the government and the Association of Municipalities. But they only provide recommendations; the final decision about the allocation of funds is taken by the Minister. There is neither involvement of non-profit organizations nor public control under the present structure of environmental financing. The allocation of funds is based on political decisions rather than on efficiency. In addition, if the Slovak Environmental Fund plans to stimulate the investment process either by mobilizing the investor's own sources or attracting other potential investors by making a project financially or otherwise attractive, it is crucial to explore forms of environmental financing. Different forms of subsidies or credits at lower than commercial rates and on convenient terms of repayment, together with democratization of the decision making process, could increase rapidly the efficiency of the allocation process. The situation at the regional level also is very critical. Lack of communication, consensus building, public bargaining and conflict prevention often burden development in the region.

Recommendations and Future Dimensions

In order to change the present situation of tense relationships, it is essential to establish different forms of regular contacts and dialogue on national as well as on regional and local levels. The commitment of the central and local governmental authorities needs to be strengthened in capacity-building activities as well as open participation and involvement by interested parties in the early stages of the planning activities.

¹ There are several other public funds, such as The State Fund of the Forest Improvement, Agriculture Fund, etc., but they are not under the Ministry of the Environment and priority is given to other development projects.

There is a strong need also to implement the economic dimension in the environmental decision making process of the Slovak Republic; however systematic application is in jeopardy. Instruments that potentially could be employed vary according to governmental regulations, market instruments as marketable permits, green taxes or other economic instruments. The fundamental condition for their effective application is economic efficiency. There also is considerable need to implement new decision making methods. Traditional cost benefit analysis, involving a systematic evaluation of the costs and benefits of health, safety and environmental control measures is one possibility. It examines alternatives, including market-based approaches, and assesses the distribution of costs and benefits (i.e., who pays and who gains).

In recent years several methods of efficient and democratic decision making based on the holistic and interdisciplinary concept of stakeholders has been developed. Economic aspects and public participation are linked in the early stage of the analysis. One example is "positional analysis" (PA), an economic decision making instrument. Under PA all decisions are taken according to a matching procedure, where the specific set of alternatives chosen represents the starting point for the entire process. Another example is "dynamic systems modelling" based on three basic criteria: realism, precision and generality. The main concept is to produce a very simplified highly general model and progress towards a more realistic and highly precise model where all stakeholders are involved in planning from the beginning of the decision making process. The whole concept is applicable to natural parks or to very complex natural ecosystems, as well as to complicated industrial technological processes.

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Chapter XV

Environmental Ethics: Its Problems and Alternatives

Zuzana Paloviová

The formation of an ethics of the environment has taken place within the past twenty years, even though the problems of judging human dealings with respect to the environment and in terms of morality have been known for a longer time. The past twenty years, however, have seen the recognition of the ethics of the environment as a scientific discipline, an institutionalization. Most of all this meant an intensive development, especially in the area of its categorical apparatus and the formation of its philosophical and methodological alternatives.

In our context the mode of forming and processing problems of environmental ethics begins rather late. This has a bearing mainly on our past political development, when the ethics of the protection of the environment were subordinated to the aims and intentions of the ruling power. The protection of the environment was pushed to the edge of interests while other values, especially those of social concerns, were focused upon. Emphasis was placed on the construction of mass settlements, the building of factories and the like, but without much consideration being given to the impact of such decisions upon the environment. The problematic of the environment consequently remained rather in the mind of the political opposition and found its theoretic expression in private thinking and literature. Undoubtedly the information barrier played a significant role in that as well.

Today we may observe, that within the past five years the exploration in that field has noticeably improved. Proposals for environmental laws¹ are being formulated, tens of non-governmental organizations for the protection of the environment were created, the formation of institutional assumptions for environmental ethics as a science is carried out, and many articles and studies focused on the problematic of the protection of the environment are being published. Regularly every year seminars and conferences on that theme are being organized; even technicians include passages about the necessity of the spiritual as well as the value-reorientation of man in their programmes; and the development teams of several companies evaluate the projects of their products in the light of their impact on the environment. The time has come when it will be necessary to include this problematic purposefully even into training and educational programmes.

Today's opinions concerning environmental ethics are pluralistic and broadly spread. Every author inclines to some type of ecological ethics, depending on his own psychologic background, education and professional direction. The separate concepts of environmental ethics differ in their issues, the justification of moral norms, and in the consequences which emerge from these alternative principles.

Intrinsic Values of the Environment

The majority of environmental ethics strives to justify the inevitability of the protection of the environment by reworking the theory of values in a direction which would take note of the value

¹ The Slovak Commission for the Environment, established in 1990. During the first 30 months of its existence it worked out 32 laws and executive regulations. See Drgonec below.

of the environment not only as an economic value, but as a value in its own right and independently of human consciousness. They tend to criticize contemporary axiologic concepts as acknowledging values only as part of the human intrinsic essence, seeing natural beings only as instrumental values, that is, nature itself is practically valueless and acquires value only in connection with the consciousness of man and for man. Within the frame of such understanding the values of natural objects are tied merely to the needs, interests and yearnings of people; this however is not a sufficient basis for the protection of the environment. Therefore they demand an acknowledgment of intrinsic values also for the other natural forms, and not only for human.

By the concept of "intrinsic value" they commonly understand the value of an object, which exists objectively or independently of the evaluating subject. That means, that the planet has an intrinsic value regardless of whether a person as a perceiving subject exists. Value in that sense exists independently, directly in nature as the qualities of the single developmental process of nature which existed before man and independently of him. They are not the creation of man; between values and man there is no inevitable connection. Value has thus been interpreted as something which is good in itself, and has its own rank independently of human perception and evaluation.

The question remains, which of the natural objects in the environment may be described as having intrinsic values. Some authors acknowledge only individual members of non-human species as having intrinsic values and that means either animals or plants (the so-called axiologic individualism); others acknowledge only species or the ecosystem (the so-called axiologic holism).

Axiologic individualism is convinced that only individual organisms could be considered to have intrinsic values. This intrinsic value of non-human individualism guarantees them "the natural right for existence and development", and man must respect this right. Representatives of the concept of "rights of animals", or also "rights of plants", inspired by the work of T. Regan, P. Singer and J.B. Callicott, represent one of the main streams of environmental ethics in our country.

The concept of a "natural right" has been adapted from personal ethics and is related to the other natural forms, not only to the human. In the interpretation of above-mentioned concepts the point is the protective right against human intervention, which ought to guarantee space for the "free development" of plants, animals . . . or the right for undisturbed existence. The use of the concept right in this connection is ethically significant, since it morally equalizes all natural species, including humankind. Our acceptance of the right for other natural forms ought to oblige us not only to respect their rights, but also to support and protect them. Were that way of understanding the concept of "natural right," and from it the ensuing principle of moral equality of species, to be thought out to its conclusion it would be impossible to live at all. K. Goodpaster in that connection wrote "the clearest and most decisive contradiction of the principle of life is, that it is impossible to live by it. . . . We have to eat (and) protect ourselves from carnivorous animals. . . . If we were to take such a criterion seriously, all these things would have to be considered as being wrong." ([1], 352)

If however the concept "natural right" is understood purely naturalistically as a biologically-vital process operating in nature, it would lead us to completely other "natural-legal conclusions". Representatives of the "rights of animals" start from the assertion that all animals, plants, etc. have the natural right for their existence and development and man must respect it. But let us ask on which natural laws does nature operate? If we begin with the basis of ecology then nature achieves the diversity of species and optimum population thanks to the "carnivorous law" and immense losses. The ecological balance rests, namely, on the food chain and the main principle of life in the

biotic community is "to eat and be eaten." When ecologists speak of systemic balance, they address a system, whose integrity rests on mechanisms which from a human point of view are absolutely merciless.

From that it follows that as regards the "natural rights" of animals, plants, etc., the concept of rights remains uncertain and hence also ambivalent. It could mark the real, biologically underscored "naturalness" of animal and plant life with its unevenness and struggle to survive, as much as, on the other end of the spectrum, a postulated ideal naturalness thanks to which all natural forms acquire the same dignity and hence also rights. We think that appealing to concepts of right or interest has no other function but subjectively to appeal to moral convictions.

Axiologic holism, as the second influential tendency of environmental ethics in our country and inspired in essence by the work of A. Naessa, credits intrinsic value only to biological species and respectively to the ecosystem. It starts with the assumption, that the basic characteristics of the natural system such as biologic diversity and complexity are good by itself and therefore order, harmony, complexity and variety are objective natural values. It follows that only ecosystems do have intrinsic values, rather than individuals. The natural system by itself and some of its subsystems — biomy, biocaenozoics, species and their populations are considered as objectively good and therefore of value. Values are here identified with objective processes of nature. Human culture, with its economy, transportation, distribution and communication networks is a process of exhaustion of biologic wealth and consequently objectively wrong. ([2], 89-95)

The above-mentioned concepts are built on a subjective axiology. But is it at all possible to build environmental ethics on an axiology thus understood? Who and how can one distinguish values representing natural objects? For whom do natural objects and the environment have value of any sort? Is it at all possible to consider values without a perceiving subject? What does the value of the environment, the value of nature and natural objects actually consist of?

By value we understand that which awakens a certain attitude, something which attracts, which is preferred; in other words, something which becomes the object of our interest, need and the like. Values are tied to human preferences; they include that which is given a meaning. What significance therefore do natural objects and even nature have for us? Why do we have to protect them? J. Urbánek understands the value of nature as its significance for the preservation of life on Earth. ([3], 145-147) It expresses relations of nature, respectively the environment, for maintaining life on Earth.

If values were merely the characteristics or the qualities of nature by itself, then man, as one of the results of the natural developmental process, would actually be a disturber of values. With his activities of changing things he would in essence deprive them of their values, which they had a priori by themselves. A natural object therefore cannot merge with value, it could only carry or acquire values. The reason why natural objects and the environment acquire value is the interest and need of man to survive. If man were not threatened by changes of the environment, he would hardly have any interest in protecting it. Only in consequence of the threat to his continual existence on this Earth does he evaluate relations between the environment and his own interests.

Environmental Values as Perceived and the Human Project

Natural objects are of value not only because they exist objectively as such, but mainly because they form a mutually interconnected and functioning system which proves capable of producing and maintaining life. From that point of view the environment is the basic value in the

sense that it has existential importance for the maintenance and functioning of life on Earth. Thus, every natural layer — inorganic, organic, human — has its value and every value of the individual natural object is interwoven with the values of other objects into a functioning entity. Hence, it makes no sense to separate instrumental from intrinsic values. A natural object has intrinsic as well as instrumental value; a natural object, which has instrumental value in relation to an organism may have intrinsic value in relation to another organism. It depends on the position of this natural object in relation to other systems in the ecosystem.

In considerations of the holistic functioning of systems on earth the problem of individual values remains open-ended. What is actually primary — the defence of individual values or values of species or those of the ecosystems? The individual death of an animal debases its individual value but on the other end that same death contributes to the maintenance of other species. It appears that an individual value stands in direct opposition to the value of species. Just as the strata of nature are arranged pyramidically, according to H. Rolston, so the instrumental and individual values are similarly not homogenically spread throughout ecosystem. Nature has developed continually over millions of years and even a series of values becomes a spiral history, according to H. Rolston. First there were simple things; then they became more and more complicated. The perception and complexity of natural objects increases. The later in the developmental scale of nature a natural object is placed, the higher its natural value but also the lower its instrumental value. That means, that non-biotic natural objects (rivers, minerals, mountains) have a fundamental (existentially significant) value, but in their class association they do have a higher instrumental value. Flora and the non-perceiving fauna (grasses, amoebae) still have a weak individual value. The perceiving fauna (animals) have a higher individual value and weaker instrumental value. Man has the highest individual value ([5], 223-2245).

Eminent human values (individuality, subjectivity, autonomy) have been acquired through the functioning of all lower strata of the pyramidal ecosystem. The human is evolutionally tied to the natural ecosystem and is dependent on the functioning of the earth's ecosystem. The human therefore interferes with the natural environment by his or her mere existence. Just like all other animals one must "consume" plants, animals and natural sources, in order to live, but such eating has its quantitative limits. The main problem is rather the loss of the feeling for the right proportion and a misunderstanding of the natural limits of every activity, including the human. Within this context it does not make sense to speak about the protection of nature as being aimed at the protection of nature as such, its very existence. In the end, humans could create changes in the natural sphere which would threaten to render further existence impossible, while nature thrived on. For that reason man must protect a certain ability of nature and by that is meant the ability to "sustain" the human stratum. One cannot and must not destroy the evolutionary composition of the environment by one's activity.² Such conduct is not coded in the systemic codes of nature, and if it surfaced it would be necessary to block it with environmental ethics, to cite an example.

The protection of the environment is therefore closely connected to the consciousness of values, which is mediated through perception, interests and human preferences. On the basis of perceiving the functioning of natural processes and their evaluation one may come up with criteria of desired actions and values — in other words, of that which should be.

As we previously pointed out, our perception of values of the environment is formed by our interactions with the environment. People have to recognize "the functioning of nature as a whole entity", unveil the ability of nature to sustain life and for that ability people have to respect and act

² For problems of the limits of human activity in relation to the environment see in greater detail J. Urbánek and I. Míchal in their works below.

responsibly towards it as a whole. This means toward the universe, earth, soil, rivers, minerals, mountains, air, plants, animals and also toward people, because we deal with a mutually interdependent system - where every part has its value which is simultaneously tied to other values. The evaluation of separate natural objects has to be perceived as a contextual event. This means that one has to perceive the role and place of a natural object in the community, in the whole mosaic of its functions and mutual interrelations with other objects, not only its taxonomy.

This means that environmental ethics has to avoid value-absolutization, possibly value-extremization of one value at the expense of other values. That way the neglect as well as the absolutization of one or another value could lead to absurdities. It could have serious social consequences, if protection of the environment, natural species, ecosystems or the protection of animals and plants received absolute priority. Respecting natural (ecologic) laws of the functioning of the environment cannot become the only consideration and certainly not the determining one, if we address the actual fact of acting. We are concerned, that absolutization of natural values could lead to an excuse for ecological dictatorship or fascism. To elevate natural values above human interests excuses any meddling with the human species. Every value applied extremely or absolutely, no matter how authorized or needed, will create problems.

The problem of values in environmental ethics has always been open to discussion. Precisely in the connection of understanding values of environmental ethics arises the question of whether for effective protection of the environment a change in values would be sufficient?

The aim of environmental ethics, oriented merely on axiology, is the formation of a minor collection of first principles complete in the sense, that they may offer the right answer for every moral dilemma and offer a uniform concept for our moral obligations. The acceptance of such a type of environmental ethics leads in our opinion to a certain kind of reductionalism, because the solution of all specific moral dilemmas is being solved with a message for a unified theory of values.

We do not dispute the importance of developing a theory of values in regard to problems for the protection of the environment. However, we cannot envision a further development of environmental ethics in the direction of a consensus on the sense of what are intrinsic values of nature and natural objects, which objects do have intrinsic values or what it means to have such values. Such a type of ethics is not capable of offering useful and practical advice for a practical judgement and solutions in regard to controversial problems of environment protection. Controversial is also the question of whether environmental ethics may be developed without a connection to economics, social politics and problems of public life.

We perceive environmental ethics as being a problem-oriented practical discipline, contrary to ethics perceived merely as an application of common philosophic concepts to problems of the environment. We doubt that theoretic problems (contestable points) may be solved in isolation of real problems. In our opinion it is the aim of environmental ethics to formulate rather less common rules, which may be acceptable in a particular context. Environmental ethics ought to participate in solving concrete environmental problems in the context of real practice and not concentrate merely on metaphysic discussion about who and why it may have intrinsic value. The realistic problem of environmental ethics as a practical discipline ought to be the achievement of such policies, which in accord with human interests will protect the environment. Thus understood environmental ethics has to be in observance of respecting functioning laws of the environment and the appropriateness of moral norms from a human point of view. Hence it has to explore whether that or another concept will function and will be effective in protecting the environment but also, what will happen after its realization with the quality of human life. It demands a

responsible conduct with foresight and resolve in relation to the environment on political, social, economic and technological standards. In the region of economic development it does not mean the stoppage of economic growth but of its coming into harmony with effective protection of the environment. Both economic growth and protection of the environment cannot be understood as two independent and at times themselves opposing activities. In such events economic growth is often viewed as something positive, while protection of the environment is a factor slowing down such development. We cannot merely strive for maximalization of gains because it is impossible to strive for maximizing the care of the environment.

The concept "growth" ought to be viewed as growth of the quality of life in its entire complexity, not only as growth of production and consumption. During the process of deciding it is necessary to join economic and environmental views by balancing all possible technological solutions, trying to bring them into harmony and seeking optimal solutions. Hence not to choose from consumption viewpoint as the most imposing, but to choose a variant that ecologically is most sensitive. This would change the entire goal of economics from maximalization to optimalization; in practical terms this would mean a retreat from preferring the greatest possible volume of consumption to a deliberate choice of the optimal which means ecologically the most parsimonious and humanly the most satisfying solutions. The compatibility of economic and environmental goals is often achieved in practice. A more effective use of energy and of raw materials is not only suitable to environmental targets, but at the same time also lowers economic expenses.

In this sense environmental ethics pays less attention to ontological problems in the sense of building a theory of values, even though it does not deny the importance of a theory of values in relation to the environment. It shifts attention to epistemological problems and mainly to how we can build durable models of a multigenerational society. This is a society which would assure satisfaction of needs of contemporary society without threatening or limiting possibilities of future generations to satisfy their own needs. The central idea in environmental ethics thus understood is intergenerational and interregional justice.

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