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ASSUMPTIONS OF EUROPEAN CULTURAL COOPERATION

Just before the outbreak of World War II, Europe's leading intellectuals, — Thomas Mann, Paul Valery, André Gide, Benedetto Croce, Nikolai Berdyayev, Miguel Unamuno, Georges Duhamel and others, — were convinced that they were witnessing the agony of Europe, and that Europe's distinguishing feature, what Thomas Mann called "a certain concept of spiritual and moral values", would inevitably succumb to the oncoming cataclysm. Today we know only too well how justified their anxiety and despair was. The deaf night of Europe's nocturne, in which flames and death seemed to devour all, really did, as they feared, come.

How can one talk again, three decades later, of European cooperation and European internationality? Do real integrational processes exist leading towards a new European synthesis? What is the meaning of European solidarity today? On what values is European culture based today? These form some of the main questions under consideration in this paper.

There is also another question: what must the nature of science and education be in order to be able to speak of international, European and world cooperation in those fields? This process is clearly one entailing the true humanisation of science and education, dealing in general with the role of the intellectual in modern society.

What has happened to Europe in the past three decades?

The years leading up to World War II witness Europe's dramatic split into three camps. Fascism suddenly grows in strength and builds its empire from the North to the Mediterranean Seas. In the West, European bourgeois liberalism helplessly retreats, surrendering one position after another in the vain hope that it can thus satiate Hitler's appetite, and that finally the thing which gave sense to tolerating armament, not interfering in Spain, closing one's eyes to Austria's annexation and coming to an agreement in Munich, would occur, — a confrontation with Bolshevism. The Soviet Union of that time is greatly weakened by Stalin's purges and isolated from Europe to the extent that it could not even be considered as a part of it. Gide returns from the Soviet Union, and disappointed and beaten, he writes his *Return* and speaks of the great betrayal under way in Russia and of the destruction of all hope. Only Berdyayev believes that, in spite of everything, Europe's regeneration can come only from the East, by accepting Russian values. Duhamel and other European liberal intellectuals, however, believe that only disease, disorder and bedlam come from the East, and that Russia belongs to Asia, especially in spirit. This generation of European intellectuals, one of the most miserable in history, expects no good to come from the East. It sees from close quarters how Ahriman, the God of Darkness, spreads the cloak of his power. It despairs over the betrayal of their governments and culture's death cry in the face of the onsurge of the brutal force of paganism and what they call "quantitative civilization".

In the period which follows, Europe's fate is determined by head-on war between Hitler's Germany and the Soviet Union. Hence, in the end, Europe's saviour did indeed come from the East. Naturally, one must not ignore the tremendous importance of the antifascist coalition and the resistance of the occupied nations. In fighting against fascism, Russia for the first time, if only temporarily, joins in solidarity with all the other European nations, in the name of progress and liberation. The spirit of Europe was reborn in the face of this mortal danger, in this exceptional effort and will to survive.

Unfortunately, for well-known reasons which include the sudden appearance of a new powerful factor on the European political stage, — the United States — and a new rivalry between two super-powers, this period of supreme triumph and great hope quickly came to an end to be replaced by what has been recorded in the annals of history as the "cold war". The polarization into two political, economic, ideological and military blocs was so accute and menacing that

Europe seemed to be heading this time for a hopeless and definite split.

However, one event, at the very beginning of this period, proved that relations between states and their bloc groupations need not invariably depend on the nature of social systems and ideological factors. This was Yugoslavia's break with the East European bloc. The ensuing years provided practical proof that the most active cooperation is possible even between countries with different social systems, and that conversely, acute polarization can occur within one bloc of countries with the same type of social system.

With Stalin's death, destalinization in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, the Sino-Soviet confrontation, a two-way adoption of a more elastic foreign political course, greater American involvement in Asia than in Europe, the sudden rise of France and its resistance to cold-war, bloc conceptions, the change in West Germany's policy towards the East, a new situation arises which allows for very real hope concerning the future of Europe.

If we compare this new situation with that of three decades ago, we cannot but see the great differences between the two. It is not merely the fact that earlier hotbeds of tension and acute conflict have vanished. Of determining importance is the fact that the capitalist and socialist countries to a great extent influenced each other and that further evolution is being effected along the lines of convergence rather than divergence between two great social systems. In economics, one-time liberalism in the West disappears. Strong state apparatus control and direct economic processes, various forms of social security are set up and the broader social community assumes responsibility for culture and education. In the East, there is greater room for the personal initiative of the individual, the market increasingly becomes the regulator of economic life, material incentives begin to replace moral ones, the structure of needs changes and more and more the accent is placed on the consumption of material goods which obviously begins to create new personality structures, and a new mentality, that of economic-man, of consumer-man.

It could be said that capitalism became stabilized with the adoption of some new forms of socialism. On the other hand, socialism is striving to secure a higher degree of micro-economic rationality and productivity in work by depending on the market mechanism, a more liberal policy, international exchange and credit, by tolerating the growth of social differences.

Certainly, the objective economic processes themselves lead to the destruction of national and bloc barriers, once a certain level of material development and internal stability is achieved. A lesser developed society's need for concealing its poverty from the world and from its own people decreases in proportion to the degree of satisfaction given to individual human needs. However, it is significant that this gradual rapprochement between the blocs is also a matter of deliberate policy.

Today, with all those hundreds of thousands of tourists, musicians, poets, scientists, actors and sportsmen who circulate every year back and forth, with the growing exchange of cultural values and first-hand information resulting from opening borders, one can no longer speak of the iron curtain between East and West. This process, however, has only just begun and there is good reason to believe that it will continue to evolve.

Lying behind all of these surface, visible changes is a much more important and fundamental process concerning the basic cultural and spiritual values of society and man's position as an individual in it.

Nikolai Berdyayev, who always complained that no-one in the West understood Russia or the East, himself did not understand his own country when he claimed that communism, as being created in Russia, was fundamentally different from theoretical communism, *only because* the Russian soul is personalistic while being at the same time universal. Needless to say, the peculiarities of the Russian soul are a social and psychological phenomenon, and should have been more taken into consideration than was the case. However, that very Russian soul changed during the revolution, feeling the pressure of deeper and far more important factors. The fact of the matter is that the revolution broke out in Russia at a much lower degree of material development than Marx had foreseen, and that the socialist revolution in that country had to perform not only its own specific chores, but also those performed by bourgeois society in the West, such as primary accumulation, industrialization, urbanization, setting up elementary economic infra-structures, etc. Effort, deprivation and sacrifice by entire generations was the price for resolving such numerous, complex and difficult historical tasks. This, in turn, called for discipline, centralistic methods of management, moral rigour, an authoritarian structure

of thought and conduct. And this, to a great extent, is what drove Gide to despair, what made him write that "the human personality in Russia is crushed, broken".

Today, when the USSR has become the second industrial power in the world, the situation is different, and human relations will invariably have to come more and more to the fore. Characteristically, a clear turning-point can be noted in marxist philosophy leading from the dialectic of nature to humanistic problematics, to which Marx gave primary importance in his work. It is not only that young Soviet philosophers are studying what Marx had to say about the problem of man, human praxis, alienation, technology etc., and what modern phenomenologists, philosophers of existence think about these things. They are capable of publically speaking about alienation in socialism itself, which until recently was unheard of. (The official view was that alienation is characteristic only for capitalism). What does this gradual renaissance of humanism in socialist countries mean? In part, it undoubtedly means the revival of humanist traditions which lie at the roots of all European cultures. It also means criticism of existing human relations, the discovery of new solutions, corresponding to modern historical conditions.

Therefore, when speaking of the deepest roots of European culture, it is more probable that the future will bring growing rapprochement than that it will increase the distance between East and West.

Clearly, it is highly important, in discussing our problem, to establish the roots of European culture, something that must be considered in any project of international cultural cooperation.

This is first and foremost *Greek rationalism*, whose primary postulates are that the world is not in fact what our senses perceive it to be, that man can learn truth if he takes a critical approach to the appearance of things and if he thinks about them logically, erradicating desire, interest and personal aspiration from his mind. Man's ideal is knowledge as such, regardless of its possible utility or application. Man must develop his mental capacities in order to develop as a moral being. The natural extension of this rationalism is Cartesianism, the Enlightenment and Marx's philosophy.

The second root of European culture is Roman law, and in this connection, a sense for order, clarity and measure in human relations. The possibility of creating lasting large communities was greatly conditioned by this typically European and Latin sense for seeking balance in various opposites.

The third root is *humanism* which can be traced back to the Stoics and particularly grows during the Renaissance in the XVth and XVIth centuries to be revived in all later large progressive movements. A central role is given to the universalistic learning that all men are equal, brotherhood and freedom and solidarity within a true human community.

There is no doubt that Christianity played a large role in the past in constituting European culture. However, it relinquished this role to a great extent with the coming of technical progress and industrialization, with scientific development, the decline of patriarchal morale and the decisive emancipation of culture from religion. In the future, Christianity will be of only partial importance. Today, certain circles in the West are countering it with various forms of nihilism, which destroys the world of spiritual values proclaimed by Christianity, without offering any spiritual alternative in its place. Marxism is also a critical philosophy which abolishes the scale of spiritual values of bourgeois and generally class society, but which offers a positive spiritual ideal of a free, rich, developed, productive individual, who lives in a true human community, void of oppression and abuse, an individual who has become a true human being. It is important to note that nihilism came to the European West from the East, while Marxism moved from the West and permeated and was implemented in the European East.

Any talk of European internationalism must, on the one hand, bear in mind all the variety of national cultures, and on the other, mean true universalistic openness to historical trends throughout the world, without any pretensions to primacy and hegemony of any kind.

In the first instance, any internationalism, including European, must make room for the full undisturbed development of all national traits, for they are what enrich a culture and make it *concretely general*. If others did not differ from us, we would not be able to get to know ourselves or understand our worth. If others did not release and liberate themselves, we would not be able to do so either. If others did not negate the existing, we would not be able to discover the basis for further creation.

This internal tension, opposition, destruction and construction leads to the development of a whole culture in a region and in an era.

Thomas Mann nicely used the example of German culture to illustrate this dialectic of cultural creativity. In his opinion, it always counters the Mediterranean Greek-Latin world, which was universal, while Germany always separated and broke off from the community, for reasons of defence against tyranny or waging her own conquering wars. With Varus, it opposed the Romans, with Luther it protested against Catholicism and thereby lost touch with the Renaissance, it waged wars against Napoleon, and thereby weakened its link with the Enlightenment, with Nietzsche it rose against the whole of Christian morality of goodness and mercy, etc. According to Mann, the German soul is one of risk, danger, possessing a heroic concept of life, but a heroism with blind and nebulous goals, guided by vague, mystic symbols.

According to Unamuno, the soul of Spain is medieval, Don Quixotic, full of elan, obsessed with the desire to irrationalize the rational and rationalize the irrational.

Georges Duhamel believed that it was France's mission in Europe to gather and reconcile all opposites, to put order and harmony into chaos.

Nikolai Berdyayev felt that the ideal of creating an empire in which eternal truth and justice reign, prevailed throughout the whole of Russian tradition. Truth and justice are synonymous and defined by the same word ("*Pravda*"). Berdyayev thought that no other nation had such a feeling for the idea of universalism, of eccumenical brotherhood among nations. However, belief in this idea goes hand in hand with the faith that Moscow would become a third Rome and the centre of the Holy Russian Empire.

Naturally, it is irrelevant here whether or not these assessments were correct. They merely serve to illustrate the idea of internationalism as a *concrete general totality*, as an indivisible whole, which develops its richness precisely through such variety and mutual tension.

The fact that the idea of human universality cannot be bound within the framework of European internationalism, is another matter. Gone are the days when Benedetto Croce could say that "the richest and most noble of human history is concentrated in Europe". At a time when a heroic Asian nation is offering resistance unrecorded in the annals of history to a superior, brutal force and is waging a decisive battle not

only for its own survival but also for that of all other liberation movements in the world, Europe is facing the danger of truly becoming what Paul Valery called only "a small cage at the spine of Asia", particularly if it continues to take a halfhearted interest in what is going on in that far-away country.

Europe no longer enjoys a monopoly on history, it no longer has a monopoly on culture and civilization. But it can play an enormous role in world history in the coming decades if it sets an example and proves that mankind can settle all of his conflicts and disputes without the use of force, through dignified forms of competition, by adopting all that is fruitful, rational and human in others, even when it comes from countries with differing social systems and ideologies.

One of the postulates for establishing such relations among nations is the *humanization of the entire process of youth education*. This concept implies, on the one hand, criticism of all education which is reduced to the mere transmission of positive knowledge, i.e. value free information concerning events and their structures. On the other hand, it also implies something more than positive, factual knowledge, it implies critical, humanistic theory.

If we return to the meaning given to the term *theoria* by the ancient Greeks, we will recall that it was knowledge as a *value in itself*, and not as a pure *means* for attaining practical goals. Its basic aim was self-determination, self-perfection, the attainment of true humanity.

Cicero used the term *humanitas* in the same sense. Given its most general meaning, *humanitas* indicates a trait, feeling and desire which can be described as being truly human, and which should be developed in man through education (for example, kindness, consideration for others, good manners, etc.). More particularly, *humanitas* means studies producing the highest level of spiritual culture. It was this sense which was later adopted by the humanists of the Renaissance; humanist studies in their mind encompassed the language and literature of ancient Greece and Rome, including philosophy, history and rhetoric.

In the XIXth century, when bourgeois society entered the era of the industrial revolution and rapid technological progress, a tremendous social need emerged for specialists and for a practical bent to science. It resulted in a profound crisis

in the humanist studies and led to the total domination of the concept of technical rationality and the ideal of power over nature.

Science increasingly began to assume a positivist character, and endeavoured to be value neutral. A scientific specialist, regardless of whether it is a case of a bourgeois who sells his knowledge to the highest bidder, a revolted, misplaced intellectual who is concerned with pure science because nothing else makes any sense, or a loyal government expert who sees himself and his work merely as a political tool, all of these then, only exert an effort to create as rational a *means* as possible — they do not think of a critical investigation of the *goals* as being a function of science. And so the rationality of science becomes technical, civilizational, and not cultural and humanistic. Hence, science loses the power to *critically* transcend the existing forms of historical reality, to project new and fundamentally different, more human historical possibilities. Its indifference to goals and value neutrality only make it increase the growingly effective control over natural and social processes within the *framework of the existing* historical structure. Consequently, a conservative orientation hides behind the absence of a value orientation.

The true function of intellectuals is not only to give birth to and transmit positive knowledge and perfect the technique of evereffective control over objects, but also to create and express the values and a critical self-consciousness of the whole of society. Transcending the narrow framework of specialization and professional limitations, emancipation from traditional introversion, narrow-mindedness and patriarchy, at the same time creates the conditions for new processes of cultural cooperation and integration at the broadest international level.

(Translated from the Serbo-Croat by
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