FERENC GLATZ

Cohabitation and Future in Europe

We research history, while we think about present and future. We know: some factors of the endless history are elevated as topics of historical research by present interests themselves.

On Multicultural Society

In the 15–20th centuries one of Europe's most multicolored societies was developed. A colorful ethnic pattern: verious – southern, western, and even northern Slavic tribes, Albanians, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Romanians, Jews. A colorful religious and traditional pattern as well: Orthodox – Bizantyne – and western – Roman – Christians and their denominations, Muslims. (From the 11st century the area is the contact territory of Byzantine and Roman Christianity, and from the 15th century to this day it is a frontier between the Muslim and Christian worlds.) The local social life is a mixture of typical traditional systems. Since this land is frontier between great European–Asian empires – soma parts of it centuries long, 18–19th centuries – it is formally a military frontier area in the Western Roman Empire. Its inhabitants were not subjects of modern European civic administration, law and partly the taxing system. The population's way of life and traditions were defined by the need of staying alive, the constant vigilance, permanent war and irregular skirmishes. (Perhaps that is the cause of the emergence of the so called "cruel", "Balcanic" behavioral forms, often debated and psychologized in Western literature.) The area called West Balkans is characteristically segmented and remote, with mountain ranges where conditions are generally harsh, while its Northwestern part is one of Europe's most fertile agricultural riverside lands: the meeting point of the Danube and the Tisza, two significant East European rivers. This is the so called Vojvodina area with outstanding agricultural and commercial features. It was not only the frontier of two great empires, the Asian Turkish and the Western Roman ones with a significant merchant/smuggler population for centuries, but also a commercial corridor in the age of industrial and technical revolutions in the 19–20th centuries (and could be one today). Socially, concerning distribution of work, possessions and professions, it is an especially multicolored society.

On the Attention to Southeast Europe

The Southeast European area and its many natural and human colors caught the attention of the West because of certain factors of global power. (Acts of the endless history become research topics depending on current interests …) As an enemy of the

Turkish Empire, ruling this land since the 15th century, England appeared in the area in the middle of the 19th century to improve free shipping in the Mediterranean and on the Danube, as a champion of free trade. Its politicians were followed by its scientists. Russia (1853–1856) also sought an entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, therefore it became aware of mutual interests with Slavic peoples and Pravoslav religion on the Balkans. A new field of scientific studies was established at this time, balcanistics in St. Petersburg and Moscow. The Austro–Hungarian Monarchy appearsed after the Russo-Turkish war (1877–1878) with its new Balkans policy, followed by the institutionalization of cultural-scientific attention in Vienna towards the peoples of the Balkans at the end of the 19th century. (In the new Balkans politics the Hungarian "lobby" of the common Austro-Hungarian foreign and financial ministries had a definitive role. Benjámin Kállay and the monarchy's official-archivist Lajos Thallóczy had greatly improved Austro-Hungarian scientific-cultural relations in Southeast Europe in 1900–1916. The first deliberate series of Hungarian actions concerning cultural and scientific policy in Southeast Europe took place at that time.) And at the beginning of the century, the new world power, Germany emerged, also looking for an entrance to the Mediterranean and to establish routes of global commerce towards the East. (Germany was also interested in the southeastern food production and industrial belt of the Danube area, and sought the support of the German population that moved here in the 18–19th centuries.) German politics was followed by German science, carrying on with the traditions of the South German merchant cities, like Munich. Their interest was strengthened as part of the plans for world domination during the Third Reich (after 1934) and as a consequence, the whole Southeast European area became a crucial point of conflict between Germany, England and the developing Italy. Several balkanists are at work analysing local societies. Naturally Germany is mostly interested in the research concerning ethnic Germans. After 1939 the Soviet Union also became interested, cradling different ideas about world domination, and this interest partly lived on even after the war. Until yesterday. Yesterday, when the attention towards the area – both in politics and economy – was renewed. The southeastern enlargement of the European Union (2004) turned the attention of military, strategic and environmental management policies here. (Renewed Ethnic Conflicts and the Danube Valley, 2008–2010.) Interestingly, social sciences did not catch up this time. (Contrary to Russian scientific workshops.) There were some humble Hungarian endeavours worth mentioning within the framework of academic national strategic research, attempting to get the attention of social sciences, water- and environmental management, rural and commercial politics towards this area (2005–2011).

Vojvodina as a "Historical Case Study"

We talk about the past, while we think on the present.

Nowadays we deal with one of Southeast Europe's minor areas, the southern Great Plain territory of the Danube–Tisza area, the history of the so called Vojvodina.

We are driven towards this topic by the current interest concerning the research of Serbian–Hungarian cohabitation: first and foremost the need to reveal the conflicts between the two peoples in the 20th century. (Because this cohabitation indicates a wonderful linguistic-cultural diversity for researchers and contemporary travellers – enchanting West European and Americal social science literature in the last one and a half century. We have to add: with reason. But…) In everyday life this society, with various religions, ethnicities and interests was full of constant conflicts and mutual distrust. (These problems were integrated into "systems", national, religious systems, by modern intellectuals: the clergy competing for followers as well as the secular intelligentsia competing for jobs in the administration and education.) These conflicts were naturally given "national" and "religious" frameworks at the time of great national conflicts within the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, during the conflict of the two main parts of the empire, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg hereditary lands. But its most brutal form, a series of mass murders almost on genocidal level was reached during World War II, in 1942 and later in 1944–1945. A topic for historians: how do national communities, grown up in and used to a diverse culture, turn against each other during just in a generation's time and reach the program of collective genocide? And all this using the most barbaric killing methods, including beating people to death. This is one of the most pressing question of modern historical science. And it is not even about Serbian–Hungarian genocide, but Serbian–German, Serbian–Croatian, Romanian, Slovak, Jewish ethnic cleansing. Another question is how this ethnic-denominational genocide fits into the all-pervading "political genocide": partly the wish of "cleansing" the area of the nation state from other ethnicities, partly the "liquidation" of enemies of the Communist political system. (More than 50% on the lists of victims was proven Serbian, loyalist, collaborator of the invaders, etc.) That is why we say: the Serbian-Hungarian topic can only be studied and interpreted when embedded into the international environment. That is why we say: understanding the reasons of genocides needs the studying of political systems. Pre-war Yugoslavian and Hungarian or German systems of occupation, as well as the Communists systems prevailing in 1944 have to be studied. And that is why we say: to reveal and understand the reasons behind unique revenge, measured in millions in Yugoslavia during 1944–1945, we have to study the local policies of global powers as well. The imperialist interests of German–English–Italian–Soviet global policies. Because the rightful question is: if the political interests of the great powers do not appear as early as the beginning of World War I, leading to the modification of borders in 1918, and in 1941, and again in 1945, while hundreds of thousands of people were deprived of possessions, expelled from their homelands or relocated, or stripped of their newly acquired goods... If all this did not happened within one generation, between 1918 and 1945, what would have happened...? If the methods and technologies of modern wartime national state propaganda, press and centralized urban mass demonstrations had not been utilized between 1914 and 1945...? Would have smouldering ethnic-religious and social conflict reached the point of mass executions, beatings to death and shooting people into rivers? These methods destroyed the centuries-old order of

a society with diverse cultures in a few decades. To answer this series of questions is a global challenge for international historical science. That is why not only Serbian and Hungarian but also Croatian, German, Austrian, Romanian and Slovak colleagues, studying also the history of Jewry, are involved in the debate of the multicultural society's tragedy in Voivodina in the first half of the 20ᵗʰ century, especially during World War II.

Serbian–Hungarian Joint Projects and Objectives

We talk about the past while we think about the present and the future. Especially us, Serbians and Hungarians.

We say it again: World War II also needs to be finished in people's souls. Here, in the Carpathian Basin, too. And being through with the war needs giving justice to the victims. (That is why we establish a joint academical committee and launch the program of systematical research of written and oral memories, build a Hungarian–Serbian research organization in Voivodina, organize cenferences, publish joint Serbian–Hungarian website, launch series of books, etc.)

Finishing the world war means disagreement with the principle of collective responsibility. According to the principle of collective responsibility the defeated ones, mostly the German and Hungarian population, and the more wealthy local populace, were annihilated or expelled and for decades discriminated by the victors after 1944. (This is one of the reasons why the international team of historians attending the present conference has already protested against the enforcement of collective impeachments in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. The principle of collective responsibility led to collective social impeachments based on social classes within the Soviet occupation zone. As we know, our professional actions during 2004–2007 were not succesful. Even the strongest political power of Europe, Germany did not dare to undertake to question the sustenance of the infamous Beneš-decree.) It is worth noting that the Serbian political opening would be greatly satisfied if, as part of their minority policy, which is excellent even by European standards, it could finally separate itself from the principle of collective responsibility, implemented in the late Yugoslavia as well. This separation would be the first such act in Europe! It would mean a little success for us, academicians in Serbia and Hungary, too… Perhaps they will succeed.

Finishing the world war means: burying the victims and granting compensations. Strangely but not surprisingly this is expected from the acedemic committee by the descendants of the victims. They think we should demolish even railway stations if they were built over mass graves, take action in cases of building and guarding local monuments of commemoration, find the names of their loved ones on those lists, find their bones in nameless graves. These are rightful expectations but maybe it is not us who should be asked to do this. (That is why we say: beside an academic committee of historians we need an interstate political-public life joint committee, which would

rightfully be expected to manage these tasks. Hopefully politicians will some day undertake to face people…)

Building a multicultural Europe

We think about the present and the future as well, while we study history. We choose Vojvodina as a field of study. Partly (firstly) because we consider it our local duty to help in finishing World War II in this area, even in people's emotions. Partly (secondly) because, we want to promote historical reconciliation within the Carpathian Basin, since we are not able to recognize our common chances with peoples living here in global and European scenes without clarifying and elaborating historical conflicts. And (thirdly) because as researchers, working on universal topics and methods of the profession of historians, we find: Voivodina perhaps helps us in understanding a recurring type of conflict in the history of modern mankind: why do mass murders and pogroms occur in a group of multicultural societies, while in other populations and other times we see almost only the benefits of multiculturality. (Exchange of various, historically established professional skills, abilities, the mentally inspiring effect of difference. For instance it was one of the foundations of the more successful chapters of Hungarian history.)

And beyond these reasons there is a fourth reason of our topic selection. For five decades, we have been thrilled to watch what has been happening in Europe: an accelerating transition of the European half continent's population. The massive appearance of African (France, Switzerland, Netherlands), Indian, Pakistani (England), Turkish (Germany) and Roma population beside the white man. Estimates tell us about 50 million Muslim Europeans today. (The emergence of Islam was a non-official topic in intellectual circles in Russian from the 1960s on.) According to statistics from 2004–2008: in leading member states of the Union (England, France, Germany, Italy) 8–10 percent of the population was born abroad and in some states this rate is even higher(18–18 percent in Switzerland and the Netherlands, 12 percent in Sweden). (Demographic literature is now beginning to pay attention to the 15 million strong Roma population only in the last few years, when, after EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 (Romania, Bulgaria), they appeared in great numbers as guest workers in Spain and France. European and American societes were at first impressed by Muslim mosques, cheap fashion products from East Africa, exotic, colorful culinary and clothing traditions. (In America migration from the South to the North resulted in similar phenomena.) Later when it turned out that the poor classes of Western society were being "ethnicized", and when the urban underclass interprets its opposition against the white society of the rich on ethnic-religious grounds, claiming collective rights – West Europe was frightened. (Since it was the host society that talked about positive ethnic-religious discrimination, separate rights, the beauty of multiculturalism. And it talked about the necessity of giving up prejudices among immigrants but mostly among original population, and the market will automatically take care of demographic processes.) In 2010, primarily in Germany where immigration had already been

controlled since 2004, began the so-called multiculturalism debate. So much so that the German Chancellor declared in her famous statement of October 2010 that the policy of multiculturalism had come to an end. (To which we added and add now: Europe has always been the continent of multiculturalism and the result of it is the formation of some twenty coordinate national cultures. And we added: multicultural development has not come to an end at all: a new type of multiculturalism is unfolding right now, uncontrollably. And we added: Europe had to deal with the multiplication of Slavs in Europe during the 7th and 8th centuries, with the Hungarian and Turkish peoples arriving from the East, and thus, similarly, today's Europe should get used to the immigration and settlement of national groups from across the continent.) The real question: what rules should Europe establish for the co-existence of new nations coming to the continent, quickly multiplying here and for the decreasing traditional citizenry?

And this question, too, turns our attention to Vojvodina.

Lessons for the Prevention of Conflicts

Let us briefly touch upon what is happening now. First: welfare states, social caretaker states of the West (1962–2011) decreased time spent in production as a sign of welfare, citizens can retire early and they get too comfortable in the old sense of the word. Their work ethic and social values change: they undertake less work in services, less manual work, yet they have a higher demand for the services sector. They let immigrants of lesser material demand take over physically wearing out or outdoor work, caretaking and services. Second: with the liberation of ex-colonies (1960s) – French, English, Dutch, Belgian ex-colonies in North-Africa, India, Pakistan – immigration to the "promised land of welfare" becomes possible, which primarily means Western Europe. Third: outside the Euro-Atlantic region – as a result of half-a-century of the presence of the white man – health and hygiene improved and there was a remarkable population growth. It is predicted that by the year 2030, some 75% of new-born babies will be born outside of the Euro-Atlantic region. There is an enormous overpopulation nowadays. And these nations will set off to the United States and Europe – centres rich in water and food supplies and infrastructure. However things may turn out, the new multicultural population is already present on the European continent. However we may evaluate this process, we should seek rules for multicultural co-existence and we should research historical examples. We know that history cannot be repeated, but similarities can give us food for thought. Nations of various religions and ethnicities have come to Vojvodina throughout the centuries because this region needed their workforce, or because power shifts in world policy pushed peoples forward by as much as a thousand kilometres. Similarly, in today's Western Europe (and North-America) shifts in world power push and pull immigrants hither and thither, while the local demand for workforce is drawing them in. This population settles down and after two generations, it feels at home and starts modifying the majority society according to its

own ideas. (This population, being its guest, considered the majority society as foreign, but by now considers it as its own, being its taxpaying citizen.)

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Certain moments of endless history are elevated to be research topics exactly due to their present relevance. When we elevated Vojvodina to be a topic of international research as an example for the coexistence of various cultures, then we had been driven by the observance of motions in today's Europe as well – cultures of the Euro-Atlantic region. We should be careful, lest unexpected shifts in world politics and power policy (from the Middle East, the Far-East or Africa) cause catastrophes also in the new Euro-Atlantic multicultural societies in formation. We should be careful, lest the lack of internal order in the coexistence of multicultural societies plunge the new European population into conflicts of unforeseeable outcome.