

Sociological co-ordinates regarding the sense of the evolution and role of the nation in the present epoch

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The problems concerning the sense of the evolution of the nation and, in close relation with them, those regarding the role of the nation in the contemporary world, are directly included in the sphere of investigation of numerous domains of knowledge, among which sociology holds a special place.

1. The scientific approach to problems pertaining to the nation implies the previous elucidation of some aspects of special methodological significance.

1.1. *First*, the development of the nation takes place in a concrete social historical environment, the nation being a component part of the social organism, an important factor of historical progress, being moreover influenced by the other factors helping in the achievement of this progress. Therefore, a first problem is the delimitation of those *great historical processes in which the nation too is integrated, with its own evolution and role*.

These great historical processes are, at least, the following: *a)* the building of the socialist society on a large part of the globe; *b)* the independent development of a large number of peoples in the so-called « third world »; *c)* the development of the technical scientific revolution; *d)* the raising of the peoples of all continents in defence of their sovereignty and independence, of their right to independently develop their vital national values. All these great processes, each of them in part and all taken together, have a direct impact on the nations and on international relationships.

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1.2 Secondly, it should be borne in mind that the nations have not the same level of development. As is known, on the one hand there are nations formed centuries ago, which have reached maturity, in the economic, cultural, and technical scientific development; on the other hand, there are young nations, some of them only in a process of formation, in quite a number of cases this process is even in an incipient stage. In these circumstances, the relating of the nation to the development of society should be done in a concrete way, by taking into account the many peculiarities caused by the very concrete situation in the different nations.

1.3. Finally, one should consider the way in which the great contemporary processes influence the development of the nation. As a grouping modality, a way of uniting the people by their community of economic, political and cultural life, of language and territory, the nation is a historic, ethnical-social community with features of its own, which turn it into a most complex, but precisely determined and defined phenomenon. Obviously, each of the defining characteristics of the nation are, to a certain extent, in one way or another, influenced by the transformations taking place in society; but the nation is not a mere sum of traits, but a community characterized by a number of features, as a whole, as a system; that is why when one refers to the development of the nation, one should not be confined to the influence exercised on each and every trait, although these impacts cannot be ignored — but see how this human community, *precisely as a whole, as a totality, as a system* is connected with the big processes that lay their seal on the present epoch.

2. The transition to socialism has most profound consequences for the nation.

2.1. As regards the *existence and development* of the nation, this transition opens up a period of constant and steady progress of the peoples' national life. In Romania, for instance, the building of the socialist system has had as an important component, the formation of the socialist nation, which furthers on a new, higher stage, the development of the people, of the Romanian nation. The policy of the Romanian Communist Party of the building of a modern economy, the dynamics, based on the gains of science and technique, the development of education, science, art, the raising of the level of civilization and culture express the multilateral flourishing of the nation in the conditions of socialism.

2.2. As to *the role of the nation*, the passing on to socialism also marks a superior stage in the evolution of the nation as a human community. The fundamental characteristics of socialism as a social system, the formation of the community of interests of all social classes and categories

making up the socialist nation, the close unity of the ranks of the nation, the unshakable brotherhood of all working people regardless of nationality, an outcome of the abolition of the exploiting classes, of the establishment of full equality of rights among all citizens of the country, Romanians, Hungarians, Germans and of other nationalities, the goals of prosperity of the common homeland, are a strong stimulus for the forces of the nation, turning to good account all creative potentialities. That is why, in socialism the nation fulfils a particularly active role in the progress of society, it joins the major motive forces in the achievement of this progress.

3. The development of the newly liberated countries has to overcome the backwardness caused by foreign occupation, pressure, and interference in internal affairs, the policy of division promoted by various monopoly circles and imperialist states.

3.1. The evolution of the peoples in these countries is in no way smooth, but sinuous and profoundly contradictory, confronted with huge difficulties, but its fundamental historical sense is clear: their gradual turning into independent nations capable to further promote the path of a free and independent development. Facts show that this evolution has a result of a necessary process, a historically determined process linked to all that is connected with the overcoming of the heavy inheritance of the past, the winning of economic independence and the consolidation of political independence, the building of a modern economy opposed to mono-culture, the surpassing of tribalism as an economic and social structure, a political organization, ideology, culture, and way of thinking. This process is likely to release the big potential forces of the peoples in the young independent states, the national liberation movements, which shows also by the example of the « third world », the immense progressive role the national ideals, the nation and its development play in the present-day epoch.

4. The influences exercised by the technical-scientific revolution on the development of the nation are varied and rather numerous, some of them being particularly strong and profound. Naturally, these influences have not the same strength in the evolution of all kinds of nations; but in one way or another, to a certain extent, they make themselves felt everywhere, and in the zones where the technical-scientific revolution is in a more advanced stage of achievement, its impact on the development of the nation is evident.

4.1. The scientific-technical revolution, the powerful progress it facilitates or determines in the domains of material production, management

of the economy and other spheres of activity, education, communications, etc., etc., makes its presence felt both in the development of *each* nation (directly, in the countries where it proceeds) and in the *relations among nations*, in international relationships. Since these aspects are *closely* linked among them, the attempt that follows regarding certain *directions* in which the unfolding of the scientific-technical revolution tells on the nation, is aimed at presenting them together.

4.2. Particularly important among these directions is the one referring to the development of the economy and the existent relationship *between* this development and the evolution of the nation.

4.2.1. It has often been backed that technical progress, the development of the production forces, the demands concerning scientific research and the application of its results surpassed the national framework, requiring larger space, acquiring already continental dimensions and tending to attain certain planetary dimensions; and such ideas have often led to the conclusion about the decline of the nation and the necessity to «surpass» it (see for instance Mario Albertini, *L'idée de nations*, *Annales de philosophie politique*, 8, 1969, p. 13-14).

4.2.2. The thesis about the outmoded character of the nation in our days is denied by the development of the nations; the integration processes, especially those in Western Europe, to which the adepts of the respective thesis refer, do not prove in any way that what is called national framework might be too narrow for the carrying out of the scientific and technical revolution.

4.2.3. The contemporary progress of the production forces, of the national production, of scientific investigation, and parallel with this, the rate intensity of applying the results of research in economy, the attaining of an efficient production, with a high productivity, with as small expenditure as possible, all this naturally requires growing proportions of production and marketing, the achievement of re-production at ever bigger scales and series. The reaching of such proportions implies an ever larger market, ever growing possibilities of marketing, of achievement.

4.2.4. But such a result is in no way the attribute of integration, as its adepts claim. Practice, especially in the last few decades, has evinced a most efficient way to adapt the volume of production and sale to the level of the requirements of technical, scientific and economic progress in our days, we refer to *co-operation*. Co-operation in economy, technique, science, in exchange relations, etc., between economic, scientific and other organizations among states, enables the attaining of the proportions

of production and the enlarging of the market necessary today, the creation of premises for a more intense scientific research and its application in production, for training the personnel needed by the economy, and not only by the economy, etc. Co-operation is creating conditions for meeting these requirements of contemporary progress based on the principles of mutual advantage, the observance of reciprocal interests, equality of rights, national independence and sovereignty, at the same time playing an important role in diversifying inter-state relations, in deepening understanding among peoples, in the interest of the cause of world peace and security.

4.2.5. To this we should add a fact of major importance, namely that the bourgeois system, has limited possibilities of achieving concentration and centralization of production, demanded by the present-day scientific technical progress, which might increase if measure were taken to ensure a more adequate mirroring and recognition of the profoundly social character of the modern means of production, by nationalizations conducted on democratic principles.

4.2.6 *Therefore, it is not the achievement of an integration concretized in the setting up of super-national institutions, with the limitation of independence, national sovereignty inherent to it, but the intensification of multilateral co-operation that is the answer indicated by life.* It is symptomatic in this respect that the idea of international co-operation has been gaining ever more ground of late. And this, not only among the opponents, but even among the adepts of integration, understood in the above-mentioned light. « We have to admit that the traditional commercial agreement starts to be an out-dated instrument in our days », Mario Zagari wrote. « What is needed, he went on, is an ever larger effective industrial, technical, scientific and cultural co-operation, more precisely, a co-operation which should embrace all sectors of the economic and social development ; from production to transports, from tourism to film making, from scientific investigation to the joint study of the course of the conjuncture of the modern economies¹ ». Such views illustrate a state of things : the multiplication of the links of co-operation on a world plane, as new, viable and efficient forms of trade, of economic relations.

4.2.7. However, processes of integration have unfolded, and according to all probabilities would further unfold and even intensify. What is the relationship between this integration process and the development of the nation ? Does integration result in the disappearance of the nations ?

(1) Mario ZAGARI, Dimension of Europe. In *Relazioni Internazionali* of May 11, 1968.

Integration, even within its present limits, when it implies the establishment of super-national institutions, is likely to prejudice the independent existence and affirmation of the nations. It supposes, in the above-mentioned conditions, the transfer of attributions from the national bodies to the super-state bodies, making elements of the economic life of vital importance for the nation, depend on outside realities and interests, favouring the penetration of capital. In the event of economic integration being accompanied by a true political integration, which means that the national states would lose even the role they play at present in establishing the economic policy of developing science, education, etc., passing this role onto the super-national organs, integration would seriously undermine the national life of the peoples, with consequences hard to foresee now, both for the internal situation of the nations and for the international relations.

4.2.8. If we were to draw conclusions for subsequent evolutions, from the already existing experience — with no other data available — then I think it could be stated that the furthering and deepening of integration in the developed capitalist countries, its expansion over the political domain, would be liable to intensify, to produce in ever greater proportions, the contradictions of the given system in the relations among states, among countries, among nations. Integration would affect, would ever more limit independence, as an expression of state sovereignty. One by one, and in ever more domains, the adoption of decisions on vital issues for the nation would pass over from the national bodies to the super-state, super-national organisms, which would finally lead to the cancelling of national independence in all that it has most essential.

The violation of state independence, the trend towards the limitation, and, in the last instance, the annulment of national sovereignty, these inherent traits and inevitable sequels of integration, as super-nationality, are of a nature to undermine the national life of the peoples, the maintenance and affirmation of the nations as distinct entities. The capitalist system, however, cannot liquidate the nations as a form of ethnical-social community, cannot surpass this means of existence and action of the human community.

The nation has a great force of resistance to the vicissitudes of history. It has proved this quality in the failure of the chauvinistic policy of national assimilation, which was successfully opposed by numerous small nations. It is now proving its force, against the trend towards integration and undermining of the life and role of the nations and of the national states; this capacity of resistance of the nations is also expressed in the hard difficulties that have to be overcome in the process of integration.

A special significance is being acquired in these conditions by the ever larger spreading in the West of late, of the ideas about the viability of the nations and of the nation-states, about the importance at present and in the future, of the states' independence national sovereignty.

The future of the nations existing in capitalism society is not their gradual disappearance, by merger, as a corollary of integration the future of these nations lies in their transformation into socialist nations, as a result of the carrying out of the revolution, of the building of socialism. The development of the formes of human community does not take place accidentally, but in an established, determinist way ; the nation is not and cannot be historically out-dated, because it has not exhausted its mission, its historical role ; just as socialism, as a first stage of communism is an inevitable step in the evolution of mankind, the evolution of the human communities can reach the forms to appear in conditions of mature communism, only through stages of the socialist nations, which perform a true work of national revival of the peoples, headed by the working class, a historically superior unity of the nation, a stage of flourishing and multilateral expression of this form of human community, of its really huge creative potentialities.

I have referred so extensively to the relationship between integration and the development of the nation, because this aspect is most often evoked when supporting the ideas regarding the out-dating of the nation. But the relationship between the scientific revolution and the development of the nation is much more complex.

4.3.1. Thus, the scientific-technical revolution intensifies the relations among states, peoples, nations, it places on new basis the circulation of material and spiritual assets, amplifies the exchange of information, and contacts on all planes. I shall refer, in conclusion, to the consequences of this state of things on the ensemble of international relations, in the conditions of the maintenance and affirmation of the nations ; here I shall only note that such an evolution does not affect the development of the nation, conceived as an ethnical-social community, but, on the contrary, it evinces the viability of the nation in an era of transformations without precedent in history.

4.3.2. Scientific and technical progress implies the multiplication and intensification of the links among the national cultures in all spheres of cultural life. In the conditions of a much larger and more rapid circulation of ideas, the national cultures, distinctive signs of the nations, are inter-conditioning, and influencing each other, joining, with all they have most characteristic, the universal creation of humanity. The universal spirit in culture, the spiritual patrimony of mankind are enriched not

by denying the national values, but by approach and incorporation of all that is most advanced in the national creation, which, by value, renders expresion to what is universal in the culture of each and every people, of each and every nation. The present means of disseminating creations in science, literature, art, etc., turn, much more fast than in the past, the authentic works which appear within the national cultures, into assets of large circulation, putting them at the disposal of those interested, on other meridians. Therefore, the national culture is not anihilated, but encouraged in its development by the intense exchange of material and spiritual values promoted in the contemporary world.

4.3.4. Likewise, the modern languages are developing as national languages ; their being enriched in the conditions of the technical-scientific revolution, which often leads to the introduction in the languages of terms with international meaning, of more intense relations, circulation of ideas and information on the world arena, does not liquidate the national languages, but helps in their affirmation.

5. The actual and future presence of the nation lays its seal on the international relations, it is one of the factors establishing the principles which should govern these relations.

5.1. The formation of the socialist nations, the unfolding of the scientific-technical revolution, the joining of the international arena by an impressive number of new peoples and nations, amplify the relations among states, countries, nations. One can rightly say that our epoch is characterized, among other things, by the multiplication and strengthening of international links, by the increase of « inter-dependencies » in the world.

5.2. These inter-dependencies do not contradict, however, the national development of the peoples, but imply it, more than that, favour and encourage it, these inter-dependencies do not deny the nation-state, with its attributes of sovereignty and independence but on the contrary, suppose the development and affirmation of these states. Generally speaking, the nation, the national state, sovereignty and independence do not bear the responsibility for the unsettled issues of the contemporary world, for the mis-understandings among states, the maintenance of tension or the outbreak of conflicts in one part of the world or another. On the contrary, experience has shown that it is not the maintenance of the nation, not the observance of sovereignty, but *the violation of the peoples' sovereign rights, the disregarding of the aspirations of the nations, be they big or small, to a development and prosperity of their own, and the interference in the home affairs of other peoples that affect international*

relations, endangering world peace. Sharing the apprehensions expressed by Georges Friedmann as to the serious consequences the existing situation in the field of nuclear power might have, the inefficiency of the present methods of combatting endemic famine², I should say that for all this one should not call responsible the devotion for national values, for the principles of sovereignty.

The expansion of the international relations while maintaining the nation, requires the strict observance of sovereignty, of the right of each and every people to decide its fate without any outside interference. Sovereignty is in no way an outmoded principle, but, together with the other principles and norms of international relations, it is the only real basis on which these relations can be placed, in keeping with the rights of the peoples to an independent existence and development. I cannot but endorse the assessment made by Prof. W.J. Stankiewicz to the effect that «...sovereignty is not a simple myth, but a fact of the political life...»³. Sovereignty and independence are an organic part of the set of other principles of international law, their observance, respect for equality of rights, mutual advantage having a decisive importance for the sound development of the international relations.

As is known, socialist Romania is consistently placing these principles at the foundation of her foreign policy, she is steadily expanding relations with the socialist countries, with other countries of the world, she is tirelessly acting for their assertion in international life, being firmly convinced that in this way she makes her contribution to the cause of peace and international detente, of intensifying co-operation and collaboration among peoples.

The extension of her international relations, the enlarging of economic, political and cultural relations, based on the sustained and many-sided progress of our socialist society moreover evince the importance of the consistent turning into deed of the principles of independence and sovereignty, equality of rights and mutual advantage, as well as non-interference in internal affairs.

6. Conclusions : The nation is therefore one of the viable phenomena of the present day epoch, playing an important motive in historical progress. Such features are characteristic not only of the present situation of the nation, but also of its prospects, for a long period, as can be foreseen

(2) Realism of Utopia, Preparation of Minds and Hearts. *Le Monde*, December 3 and 4, 1969.

(3) STANKIEWICZ W.J., *In defense of Sovereignty*, N.Y. Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 3.

today. This is the point of view guiding the policy of socialist Romania, both as regards the internal development of the Romanian nation and as regards the development of the country's international relations. « The nation, the general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, Nicolae Ceausescu pointed out, will continue to be for a long time henceforth, the basis of the development of our society in the entire period of the construction of socialism and communism ».

