

FOREWORD

Is representative democracy possible in a country characterized by an enhanced degree of diversity? Can the legislative bodies and the governments, which result from elections and reflect the will of the majority, grant the genuine equality of all citizens in a diverse society defined through the parallel existence of several communities? These are only a tiny part of the contemporary challenges, questions that are still awaiting answers in this varied and complex world.

Throughout history, outstanding thinkers have been confronted with different forms of these dilemmas, expressing their pertinent opinions in crucial moments for the odds of authentic democracy. In a celebrated essay entitled "*The Federalist*" No. 10, published in 1787, considered to be the most authoritative interpretation of the freshly issued American Constitution, James Madison must have been among the first to face the dilemma that a country such as the United States, consisting of several groups with different interests, was too large to be ruled democratically by a single government. Apparently, there are only two solutions, both of them equally unacceptable, to a dilemma perceived in this way: "the one by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same options, the same passions, and the same interests"¹. Whereas the first alternative would be unwise, the second was impracticable in Madison's opinion, who reached the conclusion that the idea of federalism (republicanism) already included in the Constitution was the solution to allow the different factions to be represented in the state institutions to an extent sufficient for their opinions to be reflected in the government decisions, and at the same time so that none of these interest groups would be able to exercise tyrannical control over the others.

Only a few years later, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, in his inaugural address in 1801 reiterated the idea that "only by allowing people full freedom to differ (...) could democratic society thrive"². Alexis de Tocqueville, in his monumental work about the American democracy, published in two volumes in 1835 and 1840 respectively, dedicated ample space to the issue that became notorious as the "tyranny of the majority", he himself showing deep concern for the

1 James Madison, "The Federalist No. 10, (1787)", in Melvin I. Urofsky (ed.), *Basic Readings in U.S. Democracy*, Published by the United States Information Agency, Division for the Study of the United States, Washington, D.C. 20547, 1994, p.45.

2 Cf. M.I. Urofsky, *Op. cit.*, p.73.

future of democracy, which he perceived as evolving towards an egalitarian leveling ideal. Tocqueville foresaw in these evolutions the germs of a new type of despotism, under the guise of a centralizing and omnipotent government, which could end by denying liberty³.

The issue of the tyranny of the majority also preoccupied John Stuart Mill, the great British philosopher, who valued Tocqueville very much and who was the first to write an ample critique in the London Review, immediately after the publication of the first volume of *Democracy in America*. In his work on representative government, published in 1861, Mill reached a conclusion that could confirm, at least in part, the fears of his predecessors: for him, the condition for a representative government to exist was "uniting all members of the nationality under the same government". If this condition is not met "free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities". When the institutional system of representative democracy exists in principle, "when there are either free institutions, or a desire for them, in any of the peoples artificially tied together, the interest of the government lies in an exactly opposite direction. It is then interested in keeping up and envenoming their antipathies; that they may be prevented from coalescing, and it may be enabled to use some of them as tools for the enslavement of others"⁴.

These dilemmas of the American classics, and of the parent of British liberalism, were relegated to oblivion for over a century, during the full ascension of nationalism, whose guiding principle was the homogenizing into "one state, one people, one culture and one official language". However, they were brought back to public attention by two recent developments on the scene of international politics, the literature of the '90s often including reference to "the Madisonian issue" or the dilemma of Jefferson and Mill.

The first of these developments is the process of European integration, in the context of which one more and more often hears of the "democratic deficit", of the widening gap between the interests of the communities and the way in which they are represented at the level of the institutions of the European Community. The enhanced attention paid to the study of this new phenomenon appears to lead to the conclusion that recently Rainer Bauböck succinctly formulated as follows: "even

3 "I think that the type of oppression which threatens democracy is different from anything there has ever been in the world before...The nations of our day cannot prevent conditions of equality from spreading in their midst. But it depends upon themselves whether equality is to lead to servitude or freedom, knowledge or barbarism, prosperity or wretchedness". Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, London, Fontana Press, 1994, pp.691, 705. See Al.Zub, "Tocqueville et 'instruire la démocratie'", in *Európa vonzásában. Emlékkönyv Kosáry Domokos 80. születésnapjára*, szerk. Glatz Ferenc, Budapest, MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 1993, pp. 93-99.

4 "Considerations on Representative Government", in John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp.428, 430.

the most inclusive *national* interpretations of political community produce growing *democratic deficits* (of non-representation) and *liberal deficits* (of ethnic inequality and intolerance of diversity)⁵. The second development is the unforeseen end of the Cold War and the collapse of the last totalitarian system of states, following which representative democracy has penetrated in wide regions of the world, characterized by a high degree of ethnocultural diversity, where stability was until recently ensured by dictatorial means. In these countries, which have recently been freed or have been for the first time established in history as independent and democratic states, the different ethnocultural groups are making use of the prerogatives of democracy, they are becoming politically active, and the way they are attempting to promote their own communal interests is often in conflict with the priorities of the democratic consolidation in a post-totalitarian or post-dictatorial context. In close connection with the difficulties that transition to democracy faces in most of these states, we can already speak about a visible discrepancy between the states characterized by a lower degree of cultural-linguistic diversity and those in which diversity is a more influential factor, often acting as an obstacle in the way to democracy and at the same time fueling regional instability.

Though seemingly on the path towards a consolidated democracy, in its evolution since after 1989 Romania has offered a few examples in which the claims of minorities followed the logic of "rights before democracy", and such manifestations have proven counterproductive from the very perspective of the major common interest, namely that of consolidating democracy to the benefit of all citizens.⁶ However, the response of the majority has sometimes been telling of hesitations as regards some requirements of the democratization process - such as decentralization or restitution of property confiscated during the communist regime - these being perceived by the Romanian public opinion as objectives with a large destabilizing potential due to the existence of several minorities in the country. Despite the difficulties that it has had to face, Romania has managed to become a factor of stability in a region where similar problems - the existence of mobilized ethnocultural communities, contested identities and the unrest fueled by a mutual feeling of threat - started several bloody conflicts and imposed "solutions" of segregation or of ethnic cleansing through more or less peaceful means. Before we formulate a few preliminary remarks on the Romanian model of interethnic relations, it appears use-

5 Rainer Bauböck, "Sharing History and Future? Time Horizons of Democratic Membership in an Age of Migration", in *Constellations*, Vol.4, No.3, January 1998, p.320. Italicized in the original.

6 In reference of this aspect one should note that there are, however, opinions, based on case studies, according to which "democratization is most likely to succeed in mitigating ethnic tensions if ethnic issues are addressed early in the transition process". Cf. René de Nevers, "Democratization and Ethnic Conflict", in Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993, p.69.

ful to make a brief review of the global dimensions of the issue in order to better understand the factors that contributed to the existence of such a model.

THE CHALLENGE OF ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

According to a report issued by the World Commission on Culture and Development, which was set up in 1991 under the aegis of UNESCO, we are citizens "in a world in which 10,000 distinct societies live in roughly 200 states", most of the countries worldwide being characterized by a more or less high degree of ethnocultural diversity⁷. The same report states that a multicultural country can benefit a great deal from its plurality, but at the same time it carries the potential for cultural conflicts. Indeed, while resounding examples of the way a multicultural country makes the best use of its own diversity as a source of creativity and wealth are difficult to invoke, examples of ethnopolitical conflict are the more numerous.

As it results from a survey carried out beginning with 1988 by Ted Robert Gurr from the University of Maryland, from 1945, 268 ethnocultural communities in 114 countries have been involved in violent conflicts of different magnitude, in which the communities formulated claims in the name of their community interests against the state or other political actors. The 1995 update of the data provided by the above-mentioned survey showed that approximately 20% of the world population is involved in these assertive movements, and that in over 60 countries of the world - which represent almost one-third of the total number of the states recognized at present by the international community - there are movements for total autonomy or a certain degree of self-government⁸.

As regards the way in which an ethnopolitical conflict that has reached the phase of intercommunity violence usually ends, Chaim Kaufmann formulated a hypothesis starting from the results of Gurr's research and noticing that among the cases listed by Gurr there are 27 intercommunity conflicts that can be considered definitely ended⁹. Analyzing the upshot of each particular case, Kaufmann concluded that in 12 of the cases the conflict was resolved due to the defeat of one of the parties (in ten cases the rebels were defeated, while in two they won), and subsequent

7 *Our Creative Diversity. Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development*, UNESCO, Paris, 1996, p.16.

8 Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflict*, Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993; Idem, "Minorities, Nationalism and Ethnopolitical Conflict", in Ch.A.Crocker, F.O.Hampson, P.Aall (ed.), *Managing Global Chaos. Sources and Responses to International Conflict*, Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997, pp.53-79.

9 "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars" in Michael E.Brown, Owen R.Coté, Jr., Sean M.Lynn-Jones, Steve E.Miller (ed.), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1997, pp.265-305. The situation that Kaufmann refers to reflects the state of ethnopo-

to the end of the conflict they set up the tyranny of one of the rival communities (most often of the majority, but there are counterexamples, too, as we have seen). In 13 cases the conflict was concluded by segregation (in 8 cases through the granting of different degrees of autonomy to the rebellious communities, whereas in 5 cases through partition, de jure or de facto), and in other two cases the conflict was stopped by the military intervention of a third party and through its occupation of the disputed region. In all the conflicts that did not end in the desintegration of the involved country, the adopted solutions confirmed the political role of ethnocultural identity, by allowing the minority involved in the dispute to regain control over its own existence. "There is not a single case where *non-ethnic civil politics* were created or restored by reconstruction of ethnic identities, power-sharing coalitions, or state-building", Kaufmann concludes¹⁰.

Regarded from this perspective, the chances of a multiethnic democracy in societies charged with interethnic tension and violence are not very encouraging. According to the data in the cited survey, the stability of these societies appears to be preeminently ensured through non-democratic means: tyranny or ethnic cleansing, carried out in more or less peaceful ways. The recent developments in the Balkan region confirm these findings. The Vance-Owen plan for Bosnia failed in 1992 exactly because it attempted at the restoration of civil politics in multiethnic Bosnia, while the Dayton peace became possible in 1995 because in the meantime exchanges of population occurred, which allowed the satisfactory territorial division among the conflicting parties and which resolved to the greatest possible extent the security dilemmas of the communities in rivalry. The immense difficulties facing the attempts to restore a multiethnic society in Kosovo are very relevant in this respect, too.

THE ROMANIAN MODEL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY

In the proximity of these dramatic dilemmas, as well as in the context of the global challenge that ethnocultural diversity represents for representative democracy, the Romanian model of interethnic relations bears a particular significance. Even though among the personalities of political life whose opinions are laid down in the following pages there are several that contest the existence of a "Chartesian" model of relations among ethnic groups, a model projected in an engineerlike manner and

litical conflicts in the year 1996. The "definitive" nature of the solution appears debatable in some cases, such as that of the eastern Timor, where the conflict that was considered solved in 1980 has recently been re-opened. "Ethnopolitical Conflict" in Ch.A.Crocker, F.O.Hampson, P.Aall (ed.), *Managing Global Chaos. Sources and Responses to International Conflict*, Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997, pp.53-79.

10 *Ibidem*, p.290. Italicized in the original.

applied with rigor and consistency in the last ten years, one can perceive a certain consensus among the speakers as regards the fact that what has been achieved in Romania in the field of interethnic peace "can serve as a model for the entire region" (Petre Roman). Those achieved in the last ten years have been nothing but "a sequence, an accumulation of solutions" (Teodor Mele^ocanu), "a dynamic and complex process" (Hildegard Puwak), which - far from being artificially conceived and intended - pursued peace and tolerance, diminishing and eliminating the potential for conflict inherited from the past, managing to demonstrate "how a country that emerged from communism can learn to live in diversity, or (...) to transform the potential threat represented by diversity in an advantage to the benefit of the entire society" (Petre Roman). Even though "it was not easy for us to learn the lesson of harmonizing diversity and equality" - as Petre Roman expresses it -, the efforts made in this sense could be based on the historical tradition of peaceful co-existence. Horia Rusu mentions, for instance, "the Romanian way of co-existence of the representatives of different ethnic groups, which was manifest in Transylvania both during the Austrian-Hungarian dualism, and in the period after the Great Unification". In Paul Philippi's opinion, "the Romanian model is based on the "continuity of plurality, of a genuine plurality, lived and experimented in these regions", "on a well-established tradition of co-existence regulated and ordered among the communities of the different ethnic groups not only at the level of individuals, but also at that of groups".

The open and honest way in which the ideas are shared in the following pages also obliges us to go beyond a gratuitous celebration and boldly approach those issues that need to be kept in mind in the future, and in connection with which dialogue must be carried on. Several speakers - Teodor Mele^ocanu, Hildegard Puwak, Béla Markó and others - emphasized that the success of the Romanian model does not mean the final resolution to all the problems, and the surmounting of those mutual prejudices and suspicions that accompany from time to time the majority-minority relation in Romania. "Ethnic diversity does not lead to problems unless it is managed incorrectly" - warns Hildegard Puwak, while Teodor Mele^ocanu points out the need for "a social prophylaxis in a space where the horrors of the Balkans should never be repeated".

These realities inherited from the past, stubbornly and deeply rooted in social psychology, about which the surveys carried out by experts (Gabriel Andreescu, George Schöpflin, György Csepeli and Gheorghe Sise^otean) inform us, will demand more attention, wisdom and political will in the future, if the further improvement of the situation or the prevention of unwanted consequences is pursued. In Radu Gheciu's address it is stated, for instance, in a very generous context, that the fundamental principle is: "yes to integration, no to forced assimilation". If at first glance we could not agree more to such an objective, at a closer look it becomes

obvious that for the time being it is unclear which are the institutional arrangements to guarantee the application of the principle in an acceptable way for all parties involved. This issue is widely discussed in the specialist literature, while the national minorities in different parts of the world seem to be caught in a vicious circle: what they perceive as a minimal claim is suspected by the majority to be a first step to secession, while what the majority considers to be the maximum acceptable offer from their perspective is perceived by the minority as the first step to assimilation. In this respect, the concept of "multicultural citizenship", circulated more and more often in the context of European integration, as well as the Union's standards of state conduct, which include several new elements regarding the modern interpretation of the concept of political community and forms of inclusion imposed by the objective of diversity accommodation, will probably facilitate the real progress in the not very distant future.

On the other hand, we should not overlook, as Horia Rusu and Béla Markó remark, that the cardinal elements of the Romanian model - representation of the minorities in the parliament, the existence of a Council for National Minorities or the very presence of the representatives of one of the important minorities in the government - does not automatically resolve all the problems. These structures inevitably reproduce "the democratic deficit" - "in parliament they will still be the minority", as Horia Rusu points out - and this aspect needs increased attention in the future. The framework of dialog must be safeguarded so that the presence of the minority representatives in these structures does not simply remain a superficial one, which can be invoked at times of inventory, but it is a genuine, effective and efficient participation in the decisions that regard the destinies of the communities they represent. As for the participation of the representatives of the Hungarian minority in the government, despite its incontestably positive results, one cannot overlook the fact that, as Béla Markó points out, some of the issues were not solved in conformity with those included in the program of the coalition. From this perspective, the exercise of participation in the government of the Hungarian minority will probably end with the conclusion that between the level of expectations on the side of the Hungarian minority and the availability of the majority there are still gaps. This conclusion will certainly play an important role in re-defining the objectives both for the short run and for the more distant future, too.

The lack of pragmatism should also be pointed out, as it is manifest through a predilection for symbolic discourse in some of the approaches. One can notice a real magic of resounding terms, the invocation of which seems to suggest the fact that all the objectives have been achieved by simple reference to the notions. In this respect one should point out the need for a more pragmatic approach, based on the practice and culture of sectorial public policies, so widespread in the world at this time and found to be so productive in the most difficult contexts. The standpoints

expressed by the participants from abroad are constructive in this sense. The opinions of James Rosapepe, Benjamin Cardin, Joe Pitts, George Voinovich, Jean-Claude Joseph, Armand Scala and Andrew Ludanyi all converge in drawing our attention to the fact that democracy, under the circumstances of ethnocultural diversity, is not something that can be set up once and forever. In order for diversity to remain a source of creativity and not to become one that results in conflict, in order for democracy to remain authentic and functional, sustained effort, ingenuity and inventiveness, availability for the accommodation of newer and newer situations are all required. A lot of courage is needed, as Benjamin Cardin underlines, and often one needs to overcome the comfortable perspective of a bureaucrat, as Joe Pitts points out.

We honestly hope that the present volume and the conference that made it possible are merely the first steps on the way to fundamenting a more modern and diversified political culture in the field of national minorities in Romania. So that diversity can stimulate the progress of the entire society, the corresponding policies should not be the monopoly of a few political actors only. They must become a public asset to be refined and perfected by the competition on the market of political offers.

Levente Salat