

FROM NATION STATE TO HUMAN PERSON: THE EVOLUTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

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Abstract. *This article is dedicated to a philosophical consideration of today's problem of sovereigntism and illiberal nationalism on the basis of the dialectic of the universal and the particular. Author argues that in ethics, universal morality takes precedence over a particularist ethos and provides a framework for any moral particularity that might serve as a means for achieving universal goals; moral particularism as relativism could only lead to the constitution of a closed society, negating the public sphere. The paper demonstrates that in the course of the development of democracy and civilization, the understanding of sovereignty gradually shifted from the national level to the global level, on the one hand, and to the human personality on the other, enabling each person to become a subject of social life and moral judgment.*

Key words: *sovereignty, morality and ethos, philosophy of democracy, human personality*

Introduction

The problem of political sovereigntism and a general illiberalism in today's world could appear as a paradox under the ongoing processes of economic and cultural globalization, and especially because the collapse of the socialist bloc at the end of the 1980s, followed by a wave of liberalization in the newly independent states of Eastern Europe, led to proclamations about "the end of history" (Fukuyama 1989), with Western-style liberal democracy now seemingly commonly accepted as the world political standard. At the same time, in the 1990s there appeared several works by more realistically inclined researchers arguing, on the contrary, about for "the end of democracy" in one or another way, the result of both unilateral Westernization under the banner of globalization and growing global inequality (Guéhenno 1993; Lasch 1995; Ohmae 1995; Crouch 2004).

The recent turns of events that led to similar pessimistic evaluations and made even liberal scholars start talking about the crisis of liberalism are thus in no way surprising as even in the 1980s and 1990s the main drive against the internationalist socialist ideology of the now seemingly obscure age of modernity was indeed quite nationalist, populist, and right wing in its nature. As Tom Junes recently wrote, the contemporary European Illiberalism is but a legacy of 1989:

In fact, the nationalist turn in Eastern Europe was fueled by the late socialist regimes which had resorted to nationalism as a substitute for increasingly hollowed-out Marxist-Leninist phraseology. In light of that, the fledgling opposition movements that contested these regimes resorted to patriotic rhetoric

and the abundant use of national flags. Understandable as it was at the time for many participants, it masked some uglier nationalist and nativist undercurrents that were present in Eastern Europe's "civil society." (Jones 2019)

Among other researchers who have investigated the contemporary political illiberalism from a position of pessimism we should mention Igor Štikš, who analyzed such events as the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit and came to the following macabre conclusion:

The vultures of souverenism, nationalism and neo-fascism are there and have already convinced large groups of European citizens, including moderate ones, that the world is basically a jungle in which only your – national – community could protect you. (Štikš 2020)

Still, in my opinion, it would be incorrect to consider the trend toward sovereigntism solely in the light of its political illiberalism. The main aim of this article is to analyze the current sovereigntist trends within the broader scope of the process of the development of democracy and sovereignty using the dialectical method. The latter implies considering the subject of study not only as a process rather than a given static state of affairs but also within the scope of the principle of "unity in plurality," as opposed to thinking in binary opposition.

In fact, the populist sovereigntist and nationalist agenda could well be presented as a kind of logical reaction to the noted ultraliberal ideas of "the end of history", the monopolizing trend of a Pax Americana that metaphysically tries to reduce the plurality of world cultural, political, ethnic, and similar phenomena to a single entity, thus viewing the complex processes of globalization as the simple and unilateral process of Westernization. At the same time, the growing recognition of global problems, including ecological disaster, climate change, and the aggravation of problems caused by social demographics, demonstrates the need for a corresponding global subject able to solve those problems while still not losing the concrete level of action (as exemplified by the well-known slogan, "Think globally, act locally"). In fact, the contradiction of the universal and the particular could well serve as a starting point for further social development – and for philosophical consideration of the current world situation with respect to not only politics but morality as well.

The Dialectic of the Universal and the Particular

In ethics, the opposition of *morality* and *ethos* could be posed as a reflection of the contradiction between the universal and the particular. Half a century ago, the English researcher Abraham Edel articulated two qualitatively different types of morality: the first answers the question "What will our conscience say?" while the second is more concerned with "What will help to preserve our community?" (Edel 1963). In this regard, the conscience, speaking in the language of the universal categorical imperative (e.g., "Do not steal"), could well collide with the empirical recognition of the allegedly existing customs in a particular society ("everyone steals", "everyone takes (gives) bribes", etc.) – and would not always emerge the winner from such clashes. In practice, that's the moral collision

experienced by the former socialist bloc in its later years, with the "hollowed-out Marxist-Leninist phraseology" noted above: a proclaimed moral obligation (with its universality and internationalism) was outdone in practice by everyday actions performed in accordance with totally different maxims. As a result, post-Soviet society quickly experienced a complete demoralization—it could even be said that in this case, a particular ethos has replaced universal morality, has usurped its place—with the marginal ethos of right-wing nationalist groups claiming the space of the missing moral guidelines while obviously lacking their universality.

On the other hand, the contradiction of public morality is not reduced to the designated opposition of deontological (imperative) and factual (custom-based) hypostases of social morality. This contradiction manifests itself in other forms as well: as a universal phenomenon, morality has an intrinsic value and a goal in itself—while the ethos is just a way to achieve a calm life and a stable society, "to preserve our community", and so forth. The problem, in fact, is not that the goals of the ethos—stability, peace, preserving the community—are "bad" or immoral in comparison with other, categorical imperatives but that they have little in common with such a phenomenon as morality, and the reduction of universal morality to particular goals narrows the horizon of the human *Weltanschauung* and makes the means take the place of the ends.

Morality concerns itself with what is good and what is bad—separate from a specific context, of course: otherwise the good could be called "good" in a completely different way (e.g., "profitable"—which always benefits something or someone). Even if in the latter case it is a good goal that is meant, such as the preservation of a stable human community, this goal is still external to the conscience of each human person. Actually, the main question that makes it possible to judge the degree of perfection of social morality is the question of *who is the subject* of a moral obligation: my human conscience or an external entity, which is in fact my own conscience but alienated from me, the ability to make moral judgments having been taken from me and granted to this or that institution, be it an ethnos, a state, or a nation?

Moral particularism is thus a kind of relativism as it affirms that the goals of such an institution take precedence over universal morality. As Nicholas Rescher rightly points out:

The fatal flaw of such radical relativism lies in its failure to distinguish sufficiently clearly between *matters of custom and social approval* on the one hand and *matters of principle and moral propriety* on the other. (Rescher 1997: 145)

In other words, we are talking about the inability to separate ethos from morality, particular customs from universal norms—or, more generally, *primary values* from *secondary values*, goals from means, ideology from ideals.

I would argue that it is precisely the presence of purpose and value in a human's personal moral consciousness that enables the value dimension of a community in which the person lives, and not vice versa: the universal is the precondition for the particular. A striking example would be science and its values: based on objectivity and strict universalism, science defies any partisanship ("Objectivity precludes particularism," as

explained by Robert Merton ([1942] 1973: 270)). Any attempts to build a kind of "national science," such as Hitler's attempts in Germany in the 1930s or Stalin's attempts in the USSR in the late 1940s, have resulted in failure. Still, an interesting example from the history of natural science is the little-known work of the French physicist Pierre Duhem, published in the midst of World War I under the provocative title *German Science*. Based on Pascal's idea of "*l'esprit de finesse*" (as opposed to *l'esprit de géométrie*, particular to math), Duhem more or less objectively examined the influence of the German national character on the features of German science and concluded that the shortcomings of "the German mind" were actually a continuation of its good qualities, such as methodicalness and scrupulousness. A German, he wrote, possesses little ability to come up with new ideas, but is quite capable of combining and developing other people's inventions, as a result of excessive development of *l'esprit de géométrie*, which suppresses common sense (*bon sens*) and prevents it from developing into the intuitive spirit of sophistication (*l'esprit de finesse*) (Duhem 1915: 42–43). Duhem described the latter as a specific feature of the French mind, as opposed to the German tendency toward mathematical deduction.

How should a modern researcher of science treat this work of the famous physicist today? How should it be evaluated by, for example, a historian or a philosopher of science? The simplest option would be to forget it as a small and forgivable weakness of a great physicist expressed under very specific historical conditions and the corresponding apogee of anti-German nationalist hysteria in France. However, it would be unwise not to recognize some point in Duhem's musings on assessing the dependence of scientific activity (which is of a universal nature) on national (and not just personal or situational) psychology and particular national traditional values. After all, no one can deny that the German nation possesses rather strong traditions of mental discipline—of course, neglecting any possible accusation as to whether that leads us to consider the Germans (or any other nation) to be more (or less) "valuable" for science (and in general). I should add that it is the second, more profound approach to the evaluation of the noted work by Pierre Duhem and the very subject of its study that seems to be more appropriate today. It is no coincidence that this book, which has been purposefully excluded from many bibliographies of the French physicist for almost a hundred years, was recently published for the first time in English translation. I think that this position indeed corresponds to the hierarchical understanding of the values of culture in general and science in particular.

The point is that any "national features," however fruitful they may be for the development of science, are useless without the subordination of those features to the universal goal of science itself, which lies (generally speaking) in the search for the truth without any borders and without any particular interest ("disinterestedness"). In fact, that would be true not only for science but for any other global enterprise of humanity, not excluding the social and the political spheres, where the contradiction of the universal and the particular could be traced no less convincingly. Thus it is not surprising that Henri Bergson grounds his idea of "open" and "closed" societies in the idea of "open" and "closed" morality. The open society (*société ouverte*) means here something different from a similar idea developed later by Karl Popper and other thinkers, who insisted on the antitraditionalism and antifundamentalism of an open rational society: according to

Bergson, a "closed" society is one that includes some people and excludes others, while an "open" society "is deemed in principle to embrace all humanity" (Bergson 1935: 230). If a closed community is based on instinct and is a static entity devoid of development, then an open one is based on morals and ideas of progress. And although the French philosopher was thinking in binary categories here, it is obvious that his concept is more meaningful and fully meets the current problems of constituting a democratic world community. Actually, only a "particularist" community can be a closed one, to the degree that it puts its particular party values above the universal values of humanity. It is precisely what we witness in today's world, with its nationalist and sovereigntist trends, and what Jürgen Habermas back in 1962 described as "*Refeudalisierung der Öffentlichkeit*," or refeudalization of the public sphere (Habermas 1990: 90).

According to the German philosopher, the process of such refeudalization consists in private interests acquiring direct political functions: large corporations begin to gradually control the public sphere (primarily through the media) and the nation-state itself. The latter, in turn, becomes an increasingly active player in the private sphere, blurring the boundaries between private and public and turning citizens into consumers. Anyway, the main idea is that the essence of the social sphere, as Habermas rightly demonstrates, lies in its universality—and as soon as some social groups are excluded from it, it is not that the social sphere becomes less complete or less adequate. It simply ceases to exist at all.

Actually, that's where the fundamental distinction between the dialectical and the metaphysical approach comes into view: different values, positions, opinions should no longer be considered just as binary oppositions, either/or. Openness, pluralism, tolerance—all these positive qualities can exist only in the presence of a certain value background. Tolerance is not the same as indifference, and pluralism does not coincide with postmodernist relativism. In politics, or rather in the philosophy of politics, that would relate to the dialectical understanding of democracy as a process of the gradual development of its subject from the particular to the universal.

Subjectness of Democracy and Sovereignty

Democracy in its liberal and Westminster model was in fact that ground on which "the end of history" conceptions were formulated in the 1980s, which in turn was one of the main reasons for the later nationalist and sovereigntist trends to appear as unexpected and discouraging phenomena. However, the Westminster model is actually just a one-sided and abstract understanding of democracy that does not suit the circumstances of the 21st century. Classical democracy as the supremacy of the people, the sovereignty of the people, whereby the people are construed as the source and bearer of state political power—such a formulation could indeed have served as an effective guideline and as an ideal of social and political organization in times of absolutism, during the period in history when usual reality was the dominance of a sole monarch or a narrow circle of persons who held power as a birthright. At that time, the dominance of the people—not of a single person or of an exclusive estate — was a progressive and revolutionary slogan. But today such an approach to understanding and defining democracy turns out to be too

abstract—that is, it is insufficiently clear to serve as a lodestar in the semidarkness of the political life of our society. The supremacy of the demos does not really mean the fullness of people's power. Democracy, according to this distinction in notions I propose (see: Mielkov, Tolstoukhov & Parapan 2016), is literally not so much "people's power" as it is "people's supremacy." Under the formal supremacy of the people (in all historical varieties of the latter term, even in its broadest understanding), social administration and governance could still be a monopolized property belonging to one person or even to several narrow social groups. In this sense, one can even talk about the existence of, say, a "democracy-monarchy" or a "democracy-oligarchy": in the first case, a formal supremacy of the people is realized under "the guidance" of one single person (an excellent example of such a "democratic monarchy" is the Soviet Union under Stalin or, say, Juan Perón's Argentina); the second case represents an elite-based form of social and state government organization (being, by the way, a much more frequent phenomenon, as exemplified by most contemporary representative democracies).

If we talk about power as supremacy, we should remember that already by the end of the 20th century in most countries of the world, an understanding of the source of supremacy as different from "all the people" was historical: even most authentic dictators and oligarchs preferred to be called and to govern "in the name of the people." But if one takes into account the actual and the potential development of democracy, the concretization of democracy in respect to different forms of administration under the declared supremacy of the people, it is easy to conclude that both democracy-monarchy and democracy-oligarchy are not proper democracies in the full and precise meaning of the word, as there is a nonpopular power of administrators hiding behind a curtain of the people's supremacy.

That is, I would argue that in the course of the development of human civilization, sovereignty and power gradually make their way from the top of the political pyramid to the bottom of it, from monarchy to grassroots democracy. The power of everyone in today's vision of democracy means the moral sovereignty and social power of *each* person who is able to do something within the field of his or her own competence. That's what could be called the power of authority limited by a sphere of corresponding knowledge and abilities. The sovereign, the supervisor, is not the one who is older, richer, or more famous, and not the one who holds a higher formal post, and not even the one who has been elected by voters, but the one who exceeds others in concrete ability, who knows his or her current sphere of activity best of all. As an old Ukrainian proverb goes: "The landlord is not the one who walks the land but the one who plows it."

Such an approach to democracy allows us to talk about democratic progress not only in terms of the workplace and grassroots democracy but also in the global sphere of political power. It is in politics that the current understanding of power as supremacy over other people is being replaced by the comprehension of power as an ability, in C. B. Macpherson's words, to develop one's own personality under the conditions of a society that overcomes the situation of alienation:

As soon as democracy is seen as a kind of society, not merely a mechanism of choosing and authorizing governments, the egalitarian principle inherent in

democracy requires not only "one man, one vote" but also "one man, one equal effective right to live as fully humanly as he may wish." (Macpherson 1973: 51)

If previously the development of one human personality (that of a leader or an autocrat) could be achieved only through and at the expense of suppressing the others, the majorities, then democracy now could only mean *universal equal development*—and not just a universal and equal right to choose who exactly should develop himself or herself in this society at the expense of the others. Could such a way of social organization be really achieved? I think the answer is yes, because human persons have now reached that stage of their development that helps them recognize the injustice and imperfection of the historically available state of social life, even if that recognition expresses itself only through a traditionalist opposition to electoral democracy in the current crisis of liberalism and the growing illiberal sovereigntism. I would argue that both those trends do not reflect the needs of the current situation and the growing competence of each human person that would no longer need to alienate its sovereignty, its right to govern one's own life either to one single monarch or to a handful of elected elite members. In the course of democracy development, in place of a socially differentiated society there arises an "aristocracy of everyone," in Benjamin Barber's apt turn of a phrase (Barber 1992).

For justice's sake, it should be stressed that the major problem of the globalizing world is not the nation-state dying out but the nation-state losing its *exclusive status* as the arena of realization of a democratic way of social organization in particular and its political life in general. As the famous social thinker and founder of communitarism Amitai Etzioni said, "The world is returning to a pre-Westphalia stage" (Etzioni 2004: 138). In other words, medieval Germany divided into numerous semi- and quasi-independent principalities is a much more adequate and attractive image for the 21st century than one single, uniform, great "German Reich" of the 19th and 20th centuries. According to the classical approach to understanding the history of human civilization, a weak and scattered state is an indication of the historical failure of the German nation, and the processes of centralization and unification—in Germany as well as in other countries—have been almost unambiguously evaluated as progressive, as indicia of modernization and the further development of civilization. However, if we were to try to evaluate that problem from the position of the human person rather than that of GDP and political dominance, we would then have to ask ourselves: what period in history (of Germany, e.g.) would we like to live in and would we choose today as an example to be imitated—a handful of mediocre independent states, a number of small principalities and free cities, say, in the 16th to 18th centuries that enriched the world culture with its greatest names in literature, music, philosophy, and science, or the superpower, totalitarian, soldered-by-iron-and-blood state machine of the German Empire before World War I or World War II that brought death and suffering to millions of people outside and inside the empire? The answer is obvious.

Moreover, according to the champion of the "many civilizations" approach to human history Samuel Huntington, the age similar to pre-Westphalia is already here: if in 1920 there was one world and in 1960 there were three of them (i.e., the Western world, the first world; the second world, comprising the socialist countries; and a third world of

economically underdeveloped or nonaligned countries), then since the 1990s there are about ten such worlds on our planet.

We are witnessing the end of the progressive era dominated by Western ideologies and are moving into an era in which multiple and diverse civilizations will interact, compete, coexist, and accommodate each other. (Huntington 1996: 95)

We should not fear that such a state of affairs and proliferation of sovereignty would mean a retreat for democracy, its metamorphosis into just one of many ways of social existence, on a level with the authoritarianism that is more traditional for non-Western civilization. On the contrary: I think that authoritarianism cloaks itself in "authoritarian democracy" as a result of non-Western countries having imposed on them the Westminster type of representative democracy that is ineffective for their conditions. The answer to such inefficiency (which manifests in more detail in such unpleasant phenomena as corruption of government officials and the general alienation of the state from the life of human persons) is the development of authoritarian democracy in the 20th century, when a non-Western person who has little sympathy for (and little comprehension of) complicated and remote state structures and institutes prefers to delegate a share of his or her rights not to depersonalized political parties but to a concrete "father of the fatherland" (or "mother of the motherland," for female populist politicians thrive as well) whom he or she could trust (or rather, whom he or she supposes he or she could trust). The way out of that impasse can only be the further development of democracy as a democracy of the human person.

It is most important to stress here that the problem is not that sovereignty in general, and particularly sovereignty as the center of political life and the focus of the space for communal discourse and decision-making process, is being relocated from the national to the global level (or, alternatively, to a local level) but that there is a process of *decentralization* of social space and the political sphere taking place in the contemporary world. The said process does manifest in different illiberal kinds of nationalism as well, but it is in no way limited to such forms as, on the one hand, it should not actually deny the universality of human values (instead, it opposes existing trends to present such values as only those of Western and liberal origins), and on the other hand, decentralization falls to the subnational level as well, enabling the development of democracy as the actual sovereignty and power of everybody, so that each person is endowed with the power or ability to make decisions and to govern his or her own life, while "the people" are considered to be constituted by the humankind population, with no national or other exceptions, taken as a socially and personally advanced demos.

Unity and Plurality in World Politics and Human Identity

From this point of view, the institutionalization of a nation-state under present conditions hampers rather than promotes the development of democratic processes in society. Nations have been and are created by violence, by inner colonization—by reducing the diversity of ethnic groups, cultures, dialects, and subnational identities of the people

living on the territory of a state to a common denominator. It is almost impossible to create a nation-state out of a multiethnic community by democratic means.

And currently, *literally all communities are plural and multicultural* (Holovatyi 2014; Mielkov 2017), and their plurality—as well as the proliferation of identities, manifested by the personalities they consist of—is increasing as they follow the course of their cultural and civilizational development. As for the scenario of the creation of a polynational state, one that would be more democratic and more adequate to the circumstances of the global world, it is seldom being realized in fact. Thus, as shown by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, out of the number of "new nations" created after the Russian czarist and the Habsburgs' Austro-Hungarian empires dissolved after World War I in 1917–1918, the only country to follow the path of democracy in the 20th century without yielding to the temptation of authoritarianism and totalitarianism was Finland—because only that country at the dawn of its independence managed to restrain the elements of ethnic nationalism. In particular, Swedish was given the status of second state language, though only 5% of the population spoke that language and though Swedish colonization of the past centuries was still alive in the Finnish national memory (Linz & Stepan 1996: 17–37).

Unfortunately, the temptation of authoritarianism and totalitarianism is quite evident not only in the fate of the nation-states created in the ruins of the empires that perished in the course of World War I but also in that of the newly independent states that arose as a result of the Cold War. However, the situation is somewhat different now owing to the increasing proliferation of human identities. The very right of "the people" to self-determination and to the creation of their own national state supposes, so to speak, a one-dimensional identity—the thing that in the 20th century gradually ceases to exist. Such unidimensional abstraction is actually a by-product of the previous historical age when the will of the nation could be embodied in a single person. "*L'état, c'est moi*," as Louis XIV is famously said to have confessed, was the simplest and clearest way to formulate this idea. And now, when no single person, be it a president or a prime minister, has the right to affirm a national identity and national sovereignty in such a convenient way, a state cannot be reduced to a single ethnic group, culture, language, or dialect. In other words, the common will can no longer be either personified or represented: each human person can represent his or her own interests by himself or herself only, as such a unique combination of interests, identities, and cultural and biological traits could be possessed by no one else, even if that other someone might prove to be more able or competent in any *one* of those spheres of activity and fields of identification.

At first, for newly independent states, gaining sovereignty from a foreign (alien) political and cultural center often leads to the literal reproduction of the former centrism in the liberated land, if on a smaller scale. For example, as the sociologist Igor Bestuzhev-Lada has observed, each part of the dissolved Soviet Union became "a Soviet Union in miniature," a proud little empire that treated any "separatism" in a similarly jealous way as the USSR did, just on a lesser scale (Bestuzhev-Lada 1998: 199).

Democratization processes are processes of the development of human personality, when it obtains new forms, ways, and levels of identification—and that's why

such processes are incompatible with the unification of culture, with the imposition of one single identity and sovereignty. Hewing to obsolete binary oppositions ("us" and "them"), such ideological movements strictly discriminate people of a different race, sex, ethnos, and so forth by not allowing the political discourse to be interpolated by any other human qualities. That feature of any abstract identity and a self-contained sovereignty can be well demonstrated using the example of *nationalism*, which is rather historical now in Western countries but still presents a threat to social stability in Eastern Europe. The Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulić (who lives in Sweden today) describes how things felt in the 1990s in the following striking way:

Being Croat has become my destiny . . . I am defined by my nationality, and by it alone. . . . Along with millions of other Croats, I was pinned to the wall of nationhood. . . . That is what the war is doing to us, reducing us to one dimension: the Nation. The trouble with this nationhood, however, is that whereas before, I was defined by my education, my job, my ideas, my character—and, yes, my nationality too—now I feel stripped of all that. I am nobody because I am not a person any more. I am one of 4.5 million Croats. . . . I am not in a position to choose any longer. Nor, I think, is anyone else. . . . One doesn't have to succumb voluntarily to this ideology of the nation—one is sucked into it. So right now, in the new state of Croatia, no one is allowed not to be a Croat. (Drakulić 1993: 50–52)

In 2020, a similar opinion was expressed by Igor Štiks, who compared the new European unity with the old situation in Yugoslavia:

[T]he EU seemed like a future that was stolen from us. A combination of all the good things Yugoslavia had (supra-national, multi-lingual, multi-religious, diverse), but more prosperous and, in contrast to the criminal chauvinist regimes that proliferated on the corpse of Yugoslavia, committed to the basic rule of law. While we disintegrated in a bloodshed, Europe was uniting itself; whilst Belgrade became a nationalist shadow of its former cosmopolitan self and whilst the spectacular Croatian coast had been deserted. (Štiks 2020)

One might think that the one and only state identity is just being replaced by other identities, also artificial. Thus Anthony Smith, who favors nationalism, argues that the "European identity" that has become so popular recently could not substitute for natural national identities, which are the only real ground for human social life (Smith 1995). However, I could argue that a "European identity" is in no way more artificial than a "French" or "German" identity—those national identities were in turn created in a more or less violent way at the expense of eliminating the more natural identities of the Burgundians and the Languedociens, or by subordinating the Franconians and the Bavarians to one Prussian dialect and Prussian police state organization. It is understood, of course, that at the beginning of the 21st century, European identity is not being created by such means—it is just found to be more suitable *on a global level*, where the more natural identities of neighborhood and township are just irrelevant, as they are too remote from the problems discussed. And that means that the European identity does not deny a French or a German identity—on the contrary, it is possible on their ground only, manifesting itself and becoming actual in other contexts and in other times. That's what Habermas means when he states:

European identity this way already could not mean anything else but unity in national diversity; by the way, German federalism after the defeat of Prussia and reconciliation between confessions proposes not the worst model for that. (Habermas 2006: 228)

In my opinion, Europe as a single organic formation is an example of what takes shape in the social space succeeding the depleted nation-state. *National* is but one of many levels and contexts for constituting identity and social space; it as an important level but not an exclusive one, not even in purely political matters. The notion of "the people" is always broader than the notion of nations, and not only because it includes representatives of different nations and ethnic groups, cultures, and races but also because the identity of each person cannot be reduced to national identity, although it is augmented by the latter. There is no tragedy in the fact that both human personality and democracy as a way of social organization outgrow the national stage of determination in their development. The death of national democracy is not to be feared as it signifies the birth of a new, more concrete and more complete form of democratic society.

It could be argued that Brexit and influential illiberal and nationalist movements in Eastern Europe (and not only there) contradict that optimistic opinion about the future of the world. However, I would repeat that the noted phenomena are a reaction not to actual globalization and democratization but to their geopolitical distortion, to globalization conducted as a linear unification effort instead of constituting a dialectical "union in plurality". Absolute particularism and nationalism have no future in the global world not because of some political power of the unification-based kind, be it the US or the EU, but because of the ongoing development of human personalities and the proliferation of their identities, which can no longer be easily reduced to one single identity, either of an ethnic, national, or ideological nature. Besides, explicit *national* sovereignty is no longer possible in today's global world owing to the inability of national leaders to actually defy, say, the currency exchange rate (some possible exceptions, such as North Korea, only confirm that rule). And, more important, human persons, even considered as abstract citizens, are no longer the masses of the modern age possessing a single common identity.

As shown by Jean Baudrillard, the people, the class, the proletariat is no more—there are only the masses remaining: the nameless, barely sensible, "silent" majority. The silent majority does not have representatives, asserts Baudrillard—representation pays the price for its former supremacy. "The masses" are no longer entities that can be characterized, as once they were, as a class of people. Submerged in their silence, they are no longer subjects (first of all, they are not the subject of history), and therefore they remain outside the sphere of articulated speech (Baudrillard 1982: 22–28). That view could sound as pessimistic, but only if we relied on the former modern understanding of masses as the subject of history and the subject of democracy. Masses exit the stage of history, to be replaced by separate human personalities.

That is, the agenda of sovereigntism and nationalism is rather an archaism professed by certain politicians pursuing their own particular goals. As the Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis has observed, there is a seemingly strange discrepancy

between the enthusiastic elites who dream and talk about some national renaissance and the pragmatically oriented "people's masses" who are already starting to understand the lessons of globalization and mind their own business while not being really interested in the phantasmagorical discourse of today's national state, particularly post-communist Poland (Staniszki 2006: 9–10).

In fact, Aleksandr Zinovyev similarly noted at the beginning of our century that the only alternative to adapting to the injustices of the outer world is to build one's own "small autonomous society, that correspond[s] to my ideal" (Zinovyev 2002: 16). Some could call it escapism and political absenteeism; I think that it is the conscious rejection of old and abstract political alienation in favor of concrete personal development.

Conclusion

The topic of human sovereignty is a vast one for philosophical consideration, and the problem of the correlation of the universal and the particular in morality, social activity, and politics, to say nothing of the development of human personality, is a complex undertaking replete with contradictions. Still, I will try to summarize the ideas and arguments expressed in this paper in the following way. The current processes of globalization and democratization are multilayer processes that lawfully combine the trends toward the unification of humanity and the constitution of humankind as the global subject of activity with the trends toward decentralization and the proliferation of human identities. But those trends are opposite and contradictory only on the face of it: decentralization means not that the center of political life and decision-making is relocating from the national level to the global one or vice versa but that the center could now be literally everywhere.

Both human personality and democracy as a way of social organization outgrow the national stage of constitution in their development, but the unilateral unification of the world according to the liberal agenda of "the end of history" is no less violent and compulsory than the illiberal nationalist attempts to stop the natural unification and globalization processes (the latter being the reaction to the former). Almost all communities are plural and multicultural today, and their plurality, along with the proliferation of identities of the human personalities they consist of, increases as they follow the course of their cultural development. The structure of the identities in question takes the form of a complex hierarchy similar to the hierarchy of values, whereby the universal serves as the ground enabling the particular. Any attempt to assert a moral particularism is relativist and doomed to failure in a world of multitudes and complexity, even if it could be seen as a threat to the liberal unification trend. The identities of human personalities can no longer be easily reduced to one single identity, either of ethnic, national, or ideological nature, and thus the sovereigntism is but a sign of the sovereignty shifting from just the national level to a plurality of levels, from global to regional to national (as the most traditional but no longer exclusive one) and to communal and finally to personal. Each human person can now have the chance to become sovereign, to be the subject of social power and moral obligation, the subject of politics and the

subject of democracy—that is, under the New Enlightenment, to have the courage to use one’s own reason.

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