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False Pragmatism!?

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EU Programs

As it is usually understood in the region, the critical approach towards the EU Programs for the Central and Eastern Europe [CEE] framed in the term ‘eastward expansion’, or ‘integration’, is addressed as a negative one. Since the fact that that could be treated from the prospective of the postcolonial, or any other, strategy, it is the reality that corrects this very negative critical position. But, what are the conditions, what are the strengths and what are the choices of someone from CEE country?

In fact, the EU Programs covered under different terms like cultural co-operations, cultural exchanges, over-passing the borders, unifying Europe, rediscovering Europe, or different training programs, [educational] workshops, seminars, symposia, etc. are that well packed that the outside impression is gaining a perfect image about and how EU is taking care for the rest of non-Schengen countries.[1] And, again in fact, they are providing certain amount of the financial support. They, the EU Programs, are very well assured that the missing funds for culture is the field where they can put an influence, implement system, dictate the development and censor the production. But, is it like that?

There is an impression that these programs are structured on the same structure as the economical, political and military ones where

the respective country has to give back a certain service to the donor. And that is the weakest point of them: it is almost impossible to implement them in the field of culture, since the culture has its own ways of developing, appearance and existing and therefore there is not a place for any giving (or paying) back. If this is so, why than all this is happening?

EU Pragmatism

As never before, it seems that the EU cultural funds and programs are playing very certain political role, at least from the prospective of the former experiences in the region. That is saying that all of them are tightly connected or in relation with the above mentioned programs (such as economical, political and military) and since they all come in block - they are result coming out of them. As sadden, the individuals from the region are asked to learn what is democracy, what is political correctness, what is multy-culturalism, what are the ethnical specifies, or what and where are their roots, what is their identity, and the worst - what their identity should be. And they have to learn according to the EU's books and rules.[2] Otherwise they will stay out of the 'promised' system of values [there are no other values than the EU's ones] - in other words: an European personae-non-grata.[3]

In such circumstances, how to convince the EU Programs that there were some kinds of cultural system and cultural values before them;[4] some understanding of democracy and the civil society; [5] some experiences of political correctness.[6] How to convince them that the region knows that the idea of multy-culturalism is an idea that radically felt down in the country of its origin (in the most promising democratic and politically correct country in the world - United States of America).[7] How to convince them that

they know that this idea is sold now all around the world as most convenient for it by convincing the world that it has to act according to this model.[8] And, finally, how to convince them that the cultural stereotypes are not transmittable, that they can not be re-designed or ordered, that the cultural models can not be implemented by a declaration or UN resolution.

In this sense, what is the mission of the EU Programs and the EU Pragmatism, according to the intention of integration and building the joint European cultural identity? If they agree upon the diversity of cultures in Europe as a principle, are they stimulating the diversification or, by unifying them - their disappearance. Finally is there a specific European cultural identity? Are there any longer any 'specific' cultural identities at all, even in Europe? Or we still have only biases, prejudices and stereotypes, one can say - utopias, about the still possible effort of building a specific European one?[9] If it is unifying - than it will not be 'specific European', and if it is re-inventing our own pasts and history [according to the presumption 'diversity of culture'] - than it will not be different than any part of world. They are both in collision with the declared attempt of the EU Programs to keep the national identities and to build a 'specific European' identity, either, according to the former, to built a complex of different cultures, or, according to the later, deepening the national identities. There is one reason not to believe in these attempts: that is the factual cultural production.

Proposed Local Program for the EU Pragmatism
[Or Locally Programmed Pragmatism]

When the conditions are like these ones, what one can make else? Do the theories of the globalism and globalization can provide

some interpretation? This seems even more likely because of the definition of globalism that, according to A. and M. Mattelart, can be recognised only if the new structure is both local and international. [1998: 147] Only if culture possesses a structure that is simultaneously both local and international - i.e. global - and if this coincides with the 'new world order of internationalised nationalism', according to Scott McQuire, 'in which national identity can no longer be secured with reference to a self-evident territory, whether geographic, ethnic, linguistic or cultural', [1998: 232] only then the expectations of the 'imperatives' of the 'global' may have some sense. [Vilic, 1999: 54]

What is left to do? There are few things that can be done. The fact that the 'control takes place outside of society', as Bernard Tschumi use to say,[10] is the most appreciate hypothesis to define the new kind of control in and of the region. In this sense, the terms like 'intellectual', 'cultural' or 'artistic' freedom of expression and its opposition 'intellectual', 'cultural' or 'artistic' repression of expression seem quite old-fashioned and have no meaning any longer. The new conditions (or better to say - the new reality) of the 'intellectual', 'cultural' or 'artistic' are to accept this 'control from outside' as the only way to be able to produce any intellectual, cultural or artistic work. In other words, the intellectuals, cultural 'practitioners' or artists have no other choice, or at least they have limited ones, but to accept the new rules of the game - willing they this or not. And this is only because of one reason - the choices are limited. Having in mind this condition of 'having-no-choice' or 'having-limited-choice' the global imperialism counts on the certain control: controlling and ruling the production towards what it thinks is most appropriate (not for the local addressants, but) for its purposes.

Since there are no other choices, one has to agree with this and to accept this. Some couple of forms and methods could be used, but one finds most appropriate to deconstruct the try of implementation of the applied system from its inner side. The very pragmatism of this model has nothing to do with the modernistic revolutionary call for radical changes, but more with the accepted actual latent and creative resistance that has to gain, first of all, some benefits for the local. What the intellectual can do is to take this intention-for-implementation of the cultural programs and to re-work it for her/his own intellectual, cultural or artistic purposes. [11] Or, instead of the former: 'Take the money and run', the intellectual has to practice 'Take the money and work' - if she/he wants not to decrease her/his intellectual, cultural or artistic needs and to survive.[12]
Positioned like this, the CEE intellectual [or at least the one from former Yugoslavia, having in mind the factual differences] is in fact marginalized more that ever. Therefore, one does not find this kind of control or regulation as repressive as it is always nominated, but rather as a stimulating one. That is the way of the acting [instead of modernistic - action = revolution] in the present moment for the local and the subaltern. Only through acting [= simply doing the things] in a certain period of time (and more for the future generation, even that this can sound like utopia) the local and the subaltern will increase his/her voice. Not to become another dictator, controller or censor, but just to be able to speak and to be heard and - intellectually to survive.

And what is left until then is to use the EU Programs and to deconstruct them in the way of the Locally Programmed Pragmatism.

References:

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[1] At this point there is a new and another dividing: NATO and non-NATO countries; stable or non-stable countries and regions, Western Balkans, South-East Balkans, South-East Europe, Lower-South Europe.

[2] Decidedly posed and counted in the program 'Culture 2000'.

[3] It is almost unbelievable how the practitioners of these programs are behaving when they arrive to implement them in the region: they are never prepared enough and in advance what audience they will face, the arrogance is on a high level, the misunderstandings coming out from their prejudices are increasing, and they are confused when they face the real conditions and opportunities.

[4] The CAD-case: Children Aid Direct arrived in Skopje with huge budget to implement street puppet theater for children. The person in charge of the project asked what they can use as a background as traditional or specific theater form in past. Having

no knowledge about the 'karagjoz' theater [theater with shadows] she was astonished that we have that theater since the 15. Century being present until the late sixties [when the western (first of all American) influences begun to appear].

[5] Some tens of formerly Unions of (something) have to re-registered: this time they were no longer Unions, Associations or ..., but NGOs. The form of citizen's associations was designed in SFR of Yugoslavia since the very begging.

[6] Since Yugoslavia was multy-national state there was a so called 'republic key' - rotating principle that allows each republic to have the turn in any instance. (Yugoslavian democratic idea and practice of 'collective and rotating governing' is right now in function in the Institutions of EU)

[7] The model was overtaken in the European rhetoric without any critical approach and consciousness about the consequences of its implementation. If it is not like that, than the destabilization of the region throughout the emphasizing of the cultural differences is consciously programmed.

[8] Kosovo case: with the implementation of the multy-cultural concept and model and its disfunctionality is most obvious in the case of Kosovo after the implementation of the control by NATO.

[9] Isn't there, in the final intention of this project for building specific European identity, some hidden opposing towards the dominant American cultural identity and imperialism?

[10] There are no more rules and regulations. [...] In the Middle Ages, society was self-regulated, auto-regulated. Regulation took at its center. [...] In the industrial era, societies became artificially regulated. The power of economic and industrial forces took over

by establishing a coherent structure throughout the whole territory: control was defined at the limits, at the edge of society. [...] The regulation was not at the center anymore, but at the periphery. [...] Today we have entered the age of deregulation, where control takes place outside of society. We witness the separation of people and language, the decentring of the subject. Or, we might say, the complete decentring of society.' [Tschumi, 1989: 267]

[11] The 'Komsi-kapidzik' case. The Foundation Open Society Institute - Macedonia announced a competition for projects that are treating the multy-cultural issues in Macedonia where it was recommended to have at least two different ethnical cultural parts. The applied [and granted] project from '359° - Network for Local and Subaltern Hermeneutics' (round-table and exhibition) has the aim to show that there are no differences and that the term 'multi-cultural' has no sense for the actual cultural conditions and has to be replaced with the more appropriate term 'intra-culturalism'.

[12]It may seem that the new [as neo] existentialism is approaching. The revival of this interpretative system has concrete reasons that already appeared.