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Planetary Enigma

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Small nations would like to convince great ones that they, too, have contributed to the destiny of the human world. They argue that they, too, play a part in the greatness of man's labours. Small nations know that they are small, but they rebel against the unjust consequences this entails: against disregard for their significance, against violation of their fate.

But — how is it that small nations exist, at all? — Because no one wants what is weak — and small nations are weak — no one wants them, no one desires them! — This question — which is perhaps scandalous?! — can be given many answers, showing that the phenomenon itself is enigmatic, to say the least, because it is completely unnatural. A look at the map of Croatia, for example, shows the amazing shape the country of a small nation can obtain. Of course, we find explanations for such theses: we talk about history. And history is especially pliable material for our scholarly imagination and its laws. The past is so well known and has such well-known laws only because the future is so unknown and uncertain! Because those who have a certain future turn everything into stories and fairy tale! They do not care about history! Obviously, small nations do not want to disappear. On the contrary! They argue their importance! they insist on their role in the human world. Will they remain small forever? — forever, meaning as long as nations exist at all. Because everything shows that they have no hopes of any change that would make them great. Nor would great nations allow it. Quite certainly! Therefore, no one expects increased and forceful competition: this is guaranteed by everyone!

Small nations obviously appeal to the well-meaning arbitration of great



ones: in the name of common truth and their own tragedy! As if a moment of sentiment had reached the planet and now their appeal seems reasonable and justified, has convincing strength and can usher in new practices. Or is this only a luxurious illusion, and the order will always be the same? — There is no special reason for this note of skepticism but simply the need to try discover the answer to the basic question: how are small nations possible?

The blood, sweat and genius of the (small) Croatian nation is scattered almost worldwide! They have played their part in the destiny of the planet through military campaigns, economic migration, the brain drain. The range of their contributions is as indeterminable as is its duration: because much is still anonymous! This means that, epochally speaking, small nations are of the fringes of great events: their borders are cynically thrown open in the history of the spirit, like the destruction of storehouses! And in the end, great nations call everything theirs!... — But this is only the description of a banal historical situation, a description that explains nothing; however sad the scenes.

Small nations are an enigmatic planetary fact. Because they do everything that great nations do. Their life is not more peaceful, not more amusing. They are provincial, which means that they reduce everything to their own measure, and are therefore late... But there is no provincial sky, nor any provincial landscape. So small nations are not looking in the right direction! They are the surviving victims of a mistake that did not take place by chance: because it repeats itself too often to be chance! A fatal mistake! A mistake that is part of the fate of man's world: a planetary mistake! History can describe them, but not justify them: as long as its essence is in Unity and Identity!

The destiny of small nations can only be cared for through what does not depend on the destiny of great nations: only if they look in the right direction! and this means through eternity. They must depend on the threshold of their heavenly and their earthly horizon; be warned by the sounds of other possibilities: that there is no single place for all, but that each has its own place!

The individual accepts this advice easily, because history only counts on him indirectly — even when it states that he is the one who shapes it. But history places a burden of responsibility on small nations that confuses them and seems ironic: calling them to action as nations, it in fact calls on them to be the followers of great nations; and in court to be voters whose value lies in their agreement with the great! Small nations lose their eternity in efforts to deny the irony of history. And he who loses eternity loses history itself!

Small nations arise though the loss of eternity as the basis for their own history. The Greeks are not a small

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nation! in comparison with the Persians, for example. They are a nation without a province, which means a nation among whom reduction has no effect: the same entirety always and everywhere! Only history can broaden dead expanses!

Small nations arise when power replaces the fairy-tale. That is why they are always conservative and moralists; or adventurers who leave all their gains to others. Great nations are held together by mediocrity; the power of matter! They arise from the reasonable, sober and productive average. And small nations are an error of daydreaming! which must then be atoned for by imitation or by becoming a follower of the mighty. They exist only in a world loyal to history, which means to causality and finalism. That is why every philosophy of history, every ideology, is inimical to them: through their very existence they introduce the unclear, create inexplicable variety, cause disorder — irritation, although marginal. And everything says that they should disappear: all the laws!

The modern appearance of small nations on the planetary scene, with the self-consciousness and resolution of historical actors, is amazing: it is the deepest paradox of progress! They demand all the prerogatives of a nation, returning the equilibrium of equal parts to the destiny of the planet! But their manner is still the manner of followers: centered around material productivity. Which is why they submit their demands as the interest of the great! which is also a novelty: instead of enslavement, fruitful integration.

Even this description does not offer any explanation. Pleading, before the enigma of small nations, for their return to eternity, for them to look in the right direction, I start from my conviction that only pluralism — and everything that it offers — can give and retain redeeming planetary perspectives, which for small nations means the achievement of a true role in the destiny of the world. A true role, not a gift presented after appeals, the gift of the mocking luxury of wealthy power, which can at



Šime Vulas, Sails, 1966, Biškupić Collection

any moment redirect its game towards liquidation!...

The enigma of small nations is the enigma of planetary variety. And everything lies in its destiny, its perspectives!

I have confidence in the final destiny of pluralistic perspectives. And

every confidence has something of a dream; every confidence has something of a fairy-tale; every confidence has something of prophetic arbitrariness! The same is true of these words...

*Translated by
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