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HOW TO ACHIEVE A LASTING CULTURE OF PEACE: CONSIDERING CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY DIMENSIONS

“To construct peace and democracy, we are beginning to understand better and better, is no limited to signing treaties, demobilizing armies, authorizing multi-party competition or altering institutions. It is further necessary, it is above all necessary to make changes in attitudes and in the image each has of the other, to transform the way in which we manage inter-personal conflicts as much as group conflicts.”

Pierre Calame

“A culture of democracy and peace would not be viable in a situation in which so-called ‘ethnic’ criteria are used to determine citizenship in a national or a cultural community.”

Federico Mayor,
Former Director General of UNESCO

***1 Introduction**

Discrimination is a serious obstacle which has to be overcome in our way towards a lasting culture of peace, be it in Europe or elsewhere. Ethnic hatred and intolerance are also forms of discrimination which should be avoided in order to eliminate completely the culture of war. This article proposes a basic analytical framework of how to link nationality and citizenship issues to the ethnic conflicts which have contributed to or stem from denial of citizenship to minorities. The author is also looking for solutions how to end this kind of ***2** intolerance among different ethnic groups and make culture of peace possible.

One has to acknowledge that it is especially difficult to think of, to implement, and manage political orders in those states, where due to border changes, warfare or migration the ethnic composition of the population is multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. Although it might sometimes seem to the outsiders that people in Europe now are living in peace and democracy¹, several examples from the Eastern and Southern Europe show that the seeds of ethnic hatred are still present. Moreover, despite the official claims on human rights respect often the “rights of

¹ By democratic rule, the author means one in which human rights are respected and basic needs-fulfilled, power emanates from the people through free and fair elections, there is a separation of powers, the law is enforced by the authorities, there is equality before law, the armed forces and police are at the service of everyone, the courts perform their functions independently, the political parties express themselves freely and there is freedom of information. The government should be accountable to the people.

the man”² are being violated. And as, for instance, the still *3 somewhat smoldering conflict in the Balkans demonstrates, the atrocities based on ethnic hatreds are especially difficult to predict, prevent and manage. This process is so complicated because the roots of the conflicts develop deep in the “minds of the men,”³ are cultivated there for centuries and may have a sudden and unpredicted expression when promoted by highly manipulative leaders. After all, as argued by the perception theorists, perceptions are difficult to change and the whole process can take an extremely long time as “the individual’s value and belief system protects itself from external alteration.”⁴ That is why to eliminate conflicts one has to start with changes in peoples mind-sets.

Perceptions on both national and individual decision-making levels are also at the core of developing citizenship policies in multi-ethnic states. Often perceptions influence the decisions of states to deny citizenship to certain groups of people. Denying citizenship to a certain ethnic group can lead to structural and other kinds of violence. As such, citizenship policies are closely interrelated with the idea of fostering a culture of peace and ethics of peaceful coexistence.

Usually there is a dilemma about giving citizenship to a minority living in the host country or denying it. The first choice is often difficult as the main population sees a threat to the cohesiveness of their national group in pluralization, diversification and multi-culturalization of their society. One can argue that the decision to give citizenship to minorities living in a state’s territory can only lead to the minimization of misperceptions, animosities and intolerance and is a good start in the new direction towards regional or global culture of *4 peace. Education and upbringing in the spirit of democracy and the respect for human rights are therefore important component of creating tolerant societies and the means of how to avoid violence caused by ethnic conflicts.

On a national level, every state has “good reason, and some obligation, to adopt policies and practices for dealing with other states and peoples that they can reasonably claim contribute

²By using this term the reference is made inclusively to both male and female.

³This term is used in the Constitution of UNESCO and refers to both male and female.

⁴Walter S. Jones, The Logic of International Relations (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), p. 222.

to their common well-being.”⁵ The analysis compatible with the tenants of the democratic theory which states that the capacity to create and accept a common political life and society a necessary prerequisite of which is citizenship, depends on a more primarily capacity of a subject to accept that there are other subjects each with its own self and individual characteristics.⁶ By taking in mind this premise one can examine the ethnic hatreds, citizenship struggles and possible solutions to the problem in various countries on three different levels of analysis: international, national and individual.

Citizenship, State and Nationality

In general, all nation state communities are constituted by strict criteria specifying who is included, and who is excluded. Citizenship is one of the forms how to be included, and since the French Revolution the ideas of nation-state and citizenship have been brought together. Being a complex and critical issue, nationality confers basic civic rights, such as the right to vote, to land ownership, or to hold political office. It also provides protection for all the legal guarantees that the constitution offers to nationals. As outlined by David Jacobson, *5 citizenship fulfills two principle tasks:

“[f]irst, it determines the criteria of membership, that is, who may and may not belong to or join ‘the people’; and second, rules of citizenship determine the nature of the ‘conversation’ between the individual and state – the rights and obligations of the citizen, the kind of access the citizen has to state, and the kind of demands the state can make upon citizens.”⁷

Citizenship is closely related to the ideas of state, nationality, national identity, national minorities, migration and human rights. A democratic state must guarantee the rights of individuals and minorities. The Peace Treaty of Westphalia and Osnabruck (1648) established the legal basis of the modern statehood and the constitution of the modern world politics.⁸ If several decades ago citizenship was only associated with the nation-state system where

⁵ Bernard P. Dauenhauer, *Citizenship in a Fragile World* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), p. 169.

⁶ Anna Yeatman, “Democratic Theory and the Subject of Citizenship,” on internet <http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/cmp/Yeatman.htm>.

⁷ David Jacobson, *Rights Across Borders: Immigration and the Decline of Citizenship* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 7.

⁸ John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, *The Globalization of World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2008), p. 23.

humankind is organized into territorial and political communities with fixed borders, today transnational migration is eroding the traditional basis of nation-state membership, namely citizenship. As migration breaks down the citizen-alien distinction, some states or ethnic groups may turn to the documents of international human rights law, for instance, the UN human rights instruments, which recognize the individual as an object of rights regardless of national affiliations or association with a certain territory.⁹

For example, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), proclaims that nationality is a human right. Every person should have nationality and it should not be stateless. Especially in those developing countries where there are serious difficulties with human rights implementation, nationality and citizenship provide the material basis of existence. Nevertheless, the international law does not provide *6 guarantees for citizenship which is up to the states to decide either they are going to give citizenship to the aliens or not. Without getting into the complicated theoretical controversies of ethnicity, nationality and citizenship issues, the author simply believes, like Oommen does, in the role of citizenship as an instrument which reconciles two identities of nationality and ethnicity and the demands of equality and identity.¹⁰

An important issue to consider in the discussion of citizenship is how ethnicity is used to manipulate with the individual's rights to citizenship of the state or how it can resolve potential conflicts. Moreover, in order to ensure a lasting peace in the world we have to study the conflicts that changing borders and consolidation of statehood produce. That is, "we need to analyze the conditions under which, and the processes by which, ethnic identities and solidarities become activated and converted to political conflict."¹¹ For instance, in the case of Latvia, the forced migration during the Soviet period became the main cause of nationality problems which have been one of the most destabilizing factors in the country both within the state and society.¹²

⁹Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰T. K. Oommen, *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 243.

¹¹Hendricks Cheryl, "The national Question, Ethnicity, and the State: Some Insights on South Africa," in: Georges Nzongala-Ntalaja and Margaret C. Lee, ed., *The State and Democracy in Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc. 1998), p. 104.

¹²Wilhelm Hoyneck, "The Baltic States in European Security: A Wider View," in *The Baltic Dimension of European Integration: Proceedings of a Conference, Riga, August 24-25, 1996*, Institute For EastWest Studies (Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Royal Danish Embassy, 1996), p. 86.

Unsettled citizenship policy can be regarded as one of potential conflict causes. In the case of Ukraine, the citizenship problems in the nearest future will be resulting from changing borders of the state and refugee flows from the war torn areas. The migration flows from Ukraine will affect the neighboring countries requesting them to take fast decisions related to these war refugees, including their legal status in the EU. *7

When there is a war going on in a country and the domestic laws do not function properly or are not consistent with the principles of international laws, international authorities have a right to intervene. International laws with institutionalized mechanisms for enforcing these laws promote mutual respect among peoples and nations and it is an essential tool for democracy at all levels.

From Institutional Peace Towards Internal Peace and Tolerance

Democratic principles, human rights and rule of law are important aspects of the citizenship issue. Granting citizenship to minorities would be much easier if a truly democratic order in the countries prevailed. However, no doubt that the governments are quite restricted in their actions and even the best world leaders are tied by governmental bureaucracies, military decisions and party rivalry. In the countries where war is going on governmental structures do not always function according to the principles of democracy. Usually, the result of governments failing to keep their focus on the needs of their people contribute to human rights abuses and various forms of discrimination one of which is denial of citizenship rights. Thus, even formally democratic governments create harsh citizenship laws for the minorities, as they are concerned with the issues of preserving an ethnically “clean” society. Therefore, one of the goals in the process of creating peace culture is to ensure that democratic principles and values guide decision-makers in their pursuit of governmental policies.

As for these goals, the role of international organizations can be significant in pointing out to the human rights violations and trying to avert them. It is exactly the institutions like for example, the UN, the EU and the OSCE, which embody and outline the values which contribute to *8 the culture of peace on nation state and group interaction levels as well as facilitate creation and development of non-violent structures and institutions. The problem is how to make states and their leaders to take these recommendations seriously and implement them in their policies?

Latvia, with the help of international institutions, has been at least formally able to resolve its problem of citizenship thus making the first steps towards eliminating inter-ethnic intolerance. This example proves that international institutions matter and can have a good impact on changing local policies and practices. However, the question still remains, if all the

people living in Latvia will be able to achieve a sense of belonging to the Latvian nation and share its national identity?

As hard as they try to implement democratic policies, domestic or international institutions cannot eliminate a culture of war and create a culture of peace in the “minds of the men” and within the societies which consist of individuals who believe in their own right and hold deeply inherent perceptions of the enemy. Indeed, the hope of preventing states from the acts of a culture of war in a form of denial of citizenship to minority members lies primarily in the individual, not institutional peace endeavors as everything that comes by force is not effective. The former Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, argues that “politics at every level is emphatically not ‘the art of the possible.’ It should, in fact, be that perseverant rebellion which seeks every day to put ethics into action and turn dreams into reality.”¹³ Individual role (and not only that of the state or community leaders) in creating peace, therefore, is crucial and how to achieve internal or individual dimensions of peace is probably the most important concern when fostering culture of peace. People have to be willing to face changes in their beliefs and mind-sets and to see friend in their enemy. *9 But how to make people believe in the best intentions towards each other? Making some recommendations might be relevant here in order to point to the solutions to the problem, not only on the institutional level as provided by nation-state or international organizations, but also on the individual, personal and informal group interaction levels.

The great Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno reminded us in the beginning of the 20th century that all democracies built on ignorance are fragile and vulnerable. Education and, especially, the human rights education, therefore, is crucial for achieving harmony in relations between the different ethnic groups living in societies where peace in its deepest and most authentic meaning is still just an idea. UNESCO, the UN agency which seeks to ensure global peace and respect for life and community, through education, science, culture and communication offers solutions of how to address the issue. UNESCO’s founders believed that knowledge and education has an ethical foundation and ethical role to play in building a peaceful world. The hope that tolerance, religious beliefs, information exchange and dialogue could eliminate violence on individual and global level remains the organization’s core ethical mission. For instance, in the 1990s, UNESCO created an Associated Schools Project Network which brought together 5000 high schools from 157 countries to facilitate implementation of schooling system which incorporates education about values, ethics, tolerance and human rights in the local education programs.¹⁴ The author herself was involved in the negotiation process of attaining

¹³Federico Mayor, *The New Page* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1995), p. xvi.

¹⁴See UNESCO webpage on internet <http://www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/projects/school2.htm>.

UNESCO's global libraries project support for building the new National Library in Latvia – a goal that has finally been fulfilled providing the new generation of Latvians with the access to a truly modern intellectual storage. Various other educational initiatives ^{*10} should be promoted locally to help to foster the future generations which would be comfortable with the idea of peaceful coexistence of different races and nationalities. Children should be taught that defining others by race, religion, ethnicity or nationality separates and isolates people, and that isolation creates artificial societies within the whole of human society. This kind of education often needs a very individual approach.

In conclusion, the culture of peace is a long-term endeavor that must be fostered primarily on individual interaction level through education which is conducted not only in accordance with local traditions, but also by taking into consideration each person's universal human obligations. Such an approach would help to create societies free from fear of discrimination such as denial of citizenship, and willing to create more democratic governments and local policies. Only then we can expect more responsible, human and non-violent decisions on a global interaction level. As Samuel Huntington has remarked, "the spread of democracy in the world means the expansion of a zone of peace in the world."¹⁵ We have to keep this belief alive if we want our children to live in a more peaceful world!

¹⁵ Von Hippel Karin, "Old Concepts and New Challenges: African Nationalism in the Post-Cold War era," in: Sola Akinrinade and Amadu Sesay, ed., *Africa in the Post-Cold War International System* (London: 1998), p. 36.