

IMPERIAL SCENARIOS DO NOT LAST LONG

Kurt Huebner



RJ *There are different models used by the elites for the purpose of nation-building: the ethic model, civic model, and sometimes the imperial model. Which model has been used the most by countries that have recently begun a nation-building process? Which model is the most successful?*

It all depends on the particular context. In general, nation building today is mostly driven by imperial objectives. I am primarily thinking about the nations created in the Central African continent that have emerged from colonial times. All of these nations are ruled by force. But there are other examples. In contrast, South Africa is based on a civic model which guarantees civil rights and freedom.

RJ *History has many examples of the imperial scenario of nation building, e.g. the 'hanization' of the CPR*

(which lead to the oppression of the Tibetans and Uighurs). Does this model (based on the assimilation of ethnic minorities) have any future or does it simply lead to more hatred within?

Imperial scenarios do not last long when it comes to nation building.

RJ *There is such a phenomenon as 'Creole nationalism,' where the indigenous population adopts religion, language, traditions and customs from the metropolitan country but continues to perceive the country as foreign. To what extent is this phenomenon viable?*

The phenomenon of the Creole Nationalism in the context of Great Britain shows its functionality and usefulness for nation building.

RJ *Can a nation be brought together by a project of modernization? Can modernization provide a forum for collective interaction?*

I do not see a conflict between the phenomena of the nation and modernization, as long as the modernization evolves naturally from the history of the nation just as the mind of the human being is the product of his or her past experiences and memories.

RJ *Is the outburst of ethno-nationalism still one of the major threats today or has it been surpassed by religious fundamentalism?*

At present **I do not see a threat from ethnic imperialism but rather from religious fundamentalism.**

RJ *What are the dominant nationalist tendencies in the West?*

In Western countries nationalism sometimes stands in opposition to civil rights movements. This friction, however, is not caused by a re-emerging nationalism. **The thing is, a nation cannot be founded solely on a civic model.** Rather, it must also be based on the past existence of its language and history, both of which define the nation.

RJ *Today in Europe there are a variety of conservative opinions surrounding perceived problems of immigration. Do you think governments will manage to maintain the citizen's interest in liberal, i.e. civic, nationalism and prevent ethno-nationalism from taking over?*

The problem of immigration can only be solved if, on the one hand, the nation confines things that are absolutely incompatible with our current cultural and also constitutional standards exclusively to the private sphere and bans them from public presentations, and, on the other hand, if it supports intensively all attempts of assimilating the immigrants.

RJ *Does the European project have any future?*

I believe that **the European Union, despite its flaws and shortcomings, is the paradigm for all countries that in reality consist of several nations.** ■

Kurt Huebner was speaking with Yulia Netesova

Kurt Huebner is one of the oldest and most respected philosophers of present-day Europe, and continues to study in Prague, Rostock, and Kiel. He fought in World War II. From 1962-1971 he was a professor emeritus of the Free University in Berlin; from 1969-1975 he was the president of the German Society for Philosophy; and from 1978-1988 he was a board member of the International Federation of Societies for Philosophy. He is a fellow of the Joachim Jungius Scientific Society in Hamburg, a fellow of the International Academy of Philosophy in Brussels, and has

authored such works as, *The Truth of Myth*, and *Criticism of the Scientific Mind*.

Kurt Huebner is one of the scientific philosophers who started out by criticizing logical empiricism. His regular seminars in Alpbach (Tyrol) with Popper, Feyerabend and others, including the participation of well-known physicists, has become the stuff of history in philosophical and scientific circles. Together with Feyerabend and Spinner, Huebner is often considered one of the leading representatives of the so-called pluralistic philosophy of science.