

# ***Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Democracy. The Problem of Ideology In Armenia.***

## **Introduction.**

Nationalism, cosmopolitanism and democracy are very deep and serious ideologies to be discussed. They have their specialties, special outlines and forms, but as I am going to show in this little essay, they have the same origin—the origin of egocentrism.

Besides showing the origin and the outlines of these three ideologies, I am going to try to revalue them a bit, but just and only taking into consideration their historical phenomena and meanings. I see the need of the latter, because, as I noticed, most of the works about nationalism, cosmopolitanism and democracy are written in connection with the dark revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in connection with the bloody struggle in the era of capitalistic interrelations' birth. These eras have passed and the ideologies need to be revalued from a new view, from new social interrelations and aspects...

Each society has to consider these three ideologies from the view of their historical, political, geographical, demographical and economic specialties. It should be mention as well, that nobody should leave behind the idea of liberality and legality.

In this little essay Armenian society and its inclinations are going to be presented, its aspects and points are going to be criticized and conclusions are going to be made on them.

Gevorg Hakobyan.

Any ideology comes from ideas, but the ideas express the human nature. That nature is much egocentric. This is the origin of all the three ideologies.

### **Nationalism.**

When does nationalism appear and how does it express the egocentrism?

One will say that egocentrism is an individual one. This is right, and we just need to add that the number of people who express the same egocentrism can make groups<sup>1</sup>. This happens naturally.

The case is that people living in a group feel a special identity with it. When they realize, that they belong to the same profits (or to the same egocentric interests), the society gets classes, or from other view, groups, that have different interests. When the interests of groups express the same in majority,<sup>2</sup> and the division of the society into groups of interests becomes harder (because they express the same in general), the society can be regarded as a nationalistic society and its values–nationalistic. Nationalism appears in this way.

The special outline of this ideology is expressed in the following as well.

The phenomenon spoken below happens during a long lasting term and in different conditions and aspects. The fact of the last makes us realize, that the ideology must not be valued from just one point, but it should be discussed differently.

It will take a long time to analyze all the aspects of nationalism and its phenomena; moreover, the purpose of this work is not that.

When the members of that nationalistic society recognize their identity to that society, they differ “we” from “they”<sup>3</sup>. Who are this “they”? Naturally “they” are out of “we”, so they are out of the egocentrism of “we”<sup>4</sup>. They are opponents and, from this view, someone would find that opponents as *enemies*. It brings to xenophobia, chauvinism and neofascism. Nationalism recognizes the “own” sort higher than the other ones in the political power (and sometimes in all cases) in its country (territory). Moreover, the imagined advantage can be expressed anywhere, where the egocentrism is able to be expressed. From this point one can differ nationalism’s (as an idea) types: political nationalism, economic nationalism, cultural nationalism, ideological nationalism or religious nationalism et cetera.

If this is a great problem, how can the process of expression of the *negative* energy of egocentrism be avoided? This is a question, which is very important for many countries, especially for post Soviet countries and, especially, for Russia<sup>5</sup>. Armenia has not got this problem yet, maybe, because the foreigners among the Armenian habitants are very few, or the capital of abroad has not rooted enough in Armenia yet.

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<sup>1</sup> Interests express Egocentrism.

<sup>2</sup> This can be reached and naturally (when the union appears peacefully) and as a cause of struggle of the classes.

<sup>3</sup> This is the origin of the citizenship as well.

<sup>4</sup> I want to mention that we should not identify the interests with the phenomenon of egocentrism. The case is that several people can express the same interests (for example to get the same job), but they can not express the same egocentric wish, because they do not identify themselves with the same group, or (another argument) their competition (for example around the needed job) comes from their *egos*, but each *ego* is opposite to the opponent’s one. The idea of interest is larger.

<sup>5</sup> This proves most of the facts showing the increase of the crime in Russia based on national intolerance.

To avoid this problem a social psychology should be taken under consideration. People should not feel their egocentricity hearted: neither economically, nor morally and nor in any other case!

When abstracting from the negative form of nationalism we can see that it has its positive sides as well. Moreover some sides are important for such a little country as Armenia, which is surrounded by states and nations too different from Armenians.

Let us bring some arguments. First of all nationalism is kind of mentality, “a particular perspective or a style of thought<sup>6</sup>.” Moreover, we can talk about the ability of nationalism to unite people, to socialize them in some special *cultural* way. In this case Mr. R. Xurshudyan truly finds, that in Armenia “*not a democratic, but a national society* should be created<sup>7</sup>.”

Here the aspects of legality, the need of justice and the rest can be eloquently mentioned, but instead of it it’s worth saying, that all that will be possible<sup>8</sup> if the ideas given below are taken into consideration.

It can be added here as well, that the egocentrism determines the sovereignty of its bearer, and the accumulation of egocentrism as a group (society, class et cetera) determines that group’s sovereignty. Moreover “the *theoretical* sovereignty of the people... by contrast, was an implication of the people’s uniqueness, its very being a distinct people, because this was the meaning of the nation, and the nation was, by definition, sovereign. The national principle was collectivistic; it reflected the collective being. Collectivistic ideologies are inherently authoritarian, for, when the collectivity is seen in unitary terms, it tends to assume the character of a collective individual possessed of a single will, and someone is bound to be its interpreter...<sup>9</sup>” However, it is the problem of the idea of sovereignty, then the idea of nationalism.

In this case the nation’s interpreter’s egocentrism stands higher then the other’s (the members of that nation) one, and as the egocentrism of the rest is hearted in this way, society falls into collision. Any legal and libertarian government is impossible without protection of social egocentrism.

### **Cosmopolitanism.**

After the “fangs” of nationalistic ideology distressed the world, after the societies were fallen into collision and under the enslavement of authoritarian, totalitarian and fascistic governments<sup>10</sup>, after the egocentrism was damaged, people had to realize and revalue the expression of their *ego*. They wanted liberty, “that sweet word—liberty...”

If nationalism expresses a collectivized egocentrism, cosmopolitanism displays a clear individual one. I will argument this phenomenon in the following way.

If nationalism is based on the phenomenon of the identity with a group, cosmopolitanism negates the “limits” of that group. This is understood from its ideas. Cosmopolitanism is a refusal of national sovereignty for the unity of the humanity (mankind); it is an ideology of “global citizenship”<sup>11</sup>. The negation of the limits of a group is a refusal of any group

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<sup>6</sup> Liah Greenfeld. Nationalism. Five Stones to Modernity. Harvard University. 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Խորշուդյան Ռ. Արդի հասարակության զարգացման ուղիները, Հանրապետական, թիվ 6(15) 2004. page 2.

<sup>8</sup> I speak about a real law (right) and order.

<sup>9</sup> Liah Greenfeld. Nationalism. Five Stones to Modernity. Harvard University. 2001.

<sup>10</sup> The Soviet Union is the best example of the enslavement of not only people, but the nations as well.

<sup>11</sup> Իժեթե-անեթե նեյ անծ. Ի Էլ Ա-ի ԺԱՆՆ Ի աճալի ան Էա. Ի ի նեա. 2005. page 239.





governing the society is acceptable, where the interests of majority are righteously protected, where the society does not feel its egocentrism hearted and, therefore the government is legitimate. Herein, the exceptional domination of the majority is not propagated here: majority is meant not from the view of being against the minority, but including the last and consulting their interests as well, as it is famously paraphrased in one of the articles of democratic idea: the rule of majority and the rights of minority<sup>22</sup> ...

### **The Problem of Ideology in Armenia.**

To observe the society in Armenia several facts should be taken into consideration. One will say, that TVs are usually considering Armenian society as a national one, or sometimes according to some comparison with other countries (especially with Azerbaijan and Turkey) that it has several cosmopolitical outlines. But almost all never look at Armenian society as a democratic one. The problem is hidden, but, very through. It should be mentioned here that the meanings and origins of the ideologies we were speaking in this essay are not docile for rank-and-file members of Armenian society. Nationalism is mixed with patriotism, cosmopolitanism—with liberty and equality, democracy—with liberal state, state of law or (which describes more concretely)—legitimate state. Moreover, the tops understand democracy as demagogy<sup>23</sup>. This “gneseological” problem should be understood by everyone and not only in Armenia.

Let us observe some phenomena thoroughly. The origin of Armenian parties should be taken under attention, as well.

If we observe the ideological basis of Armenian parties, we will find the word nationalistic in most of descriptions<sup>24</sup>. But nobody can show that they really act with deep nationalistic outline.

Though, somebody finds Armenian society “cosmopolitic”, it is hardly true. Armenia is anyway a traditional country and is situated geographically not in the best place to express its cosmopolitanism. Therefore it should be mentioned, that real deep nationalism and cosmopolitanism (with their extremistic outlines) are possible, in general, in large countries. What about the ideology of democracy; this idea is dialed with several really important phenomena.

The discontent mentality in Armenian society is one of the poor facts of nowadays. The expressions about corrupted government and the not righteous allocation with the society and its members are heard everywhere in Armenia. People want liberty. Besides that some thinkers find, that the democratic institutions do not work in Armenia. They find, that Armenia has knitted into an oligarchy. It is even said that human rights are violated. The press is full of notifications, that the “law of the power works, but not the power of law”. The democratic ideology feels decline.

The phenomena spoken here make society fall into collision. The egocentrism of different strata of the society is hearted. Just everywhere ideas are heard, that the government does not express the interests of the society (or its majority). The legal mentality degrades.

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<sup>22</sup> Իժեպե՝անեթե նեի ասծւ. Ի Էլ Ա-Ի ԾԱՆՆ Ի ճծաչի ասի Էա. Ի ր նեաա. 2005. page 141, 142.

<sup>23</sup> The ideas given here are written by taking under consideration the notices of scientists of Armenian Institute of Philosophy and Sociological Explorations in Yerevan, taken by author during a private interview.

<sup>24</sup> Պեվորդ Պողոսյան, Սամսոն Մխիթարյան. Հայաստանի քաղաքական կուսակցություններ (Տեղեկատվություն և վերլուծություն 1991-1996թթ.) Մխիթար Գոշ. Երևան 1997.

I do not want to propagate false ideas (that, which are very popular nowadays), either negate, that Armenia is much developed in democracy. We have not bad laws and have needed legal mechanisms to build a strong *état de droit* with democratic origin and institutions (they exist legally and formally, but not really<sup>25</sup>), but a long time will pass before we reach the aim. This is connected with the nature of the problem and its right phraseology.

In the opinion, that is composed here, *the problem is not, that the political power does not express the interests of the majority, but that the majority is not well expressed in the political power*, and so the egocentrism of the majority is not expressed enough in the political power.

This is a problem famous almost in every democratic country in their history.

In Armenia democracy has to be developed.

Another fact, that makes society be not content with the political power, is the disorientation of the society by the different political parties<sup>26</sup> and that the press affects negatively in some way by its notifications and estimations on the policy and government.

All these facts reflect on the society, especially on its poor and middle strata.

As a result we have a society, which does not believe anyone, any political party, a society with hearted interest, searching ways to express its *egocentric negativity*.

This position is really dangerous. The disbelief and the distrust are the best conditions for birth of such social facts, as absenteeism, political nihilism et cetera. Apart from this we can see ripening hateful among the different social strata. In such conditions the mentality degredates. No ideology is possible to be developed not negatively.

### **Conclusion. (Democratic and Political Reconstruction)**

To understand thoroughly the problem that is formulated in the previous article (*the majority is not well expressed in the political power*), one should observe the core of the society. That core is much economic.

If the rich are mostly presented in the government and if the political power mostly belongs to them, the egocentrism of the rest (especially of the poor part) is "injured". Its bearers start to express their dissatisfaction against the rich. Though it is not yet popular in the Armenian society, but if no action is prepared against it, arise of poor consequences will be inescapable.

But how express the interests of the majority?

The best way is the direct expression: **direct**—not in the meaning of direct referendum, but in the way, when *each class is able to express the interests of its class* (if the problem is in expression of interests).

Some ideas, which may be considered very strange or "fantastic", are going to be presented below, for what it is asked not to be too critical.

I want to propose an *artificial division of the society into social classes by counting with something important* (I should mention here, that here no class loses rights or gets privileges. It is just a division, in order to organize the representation of different social strata). The estimation of the property<sup>27</sup> of the society will be, of course, very difficult,

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<sup>25</sup> The sociologists I have interviews with said this.

<sup>26</sup> The large number of parties in Armenia preserves this.

<sup>27</sup> Nowadays it seems impossible, because people are apt to hide their incomes. This phenomenon is spread in Armenia. However it was possible before. Though the example of Ancient Greece and Rome

because people will interfere it. But if we take under consideration the attributes describing the strata (education, power, income and authority<sup>28</sup>) and count with the fact, that these attributes are intimately connected with each other, the idea of estimation and division of the society into classes seems not so strange and far. The matter is, that if we observe the society, we will find that each period of time identifies with some determination describing the connection between the education, authority, power and income of the people, and, therefore this periodization will bring us to age groups with special characteristics and outlines. From several characteristics we can reach to a perfunctory description of economical ability of people in the society. Other social facts can be taken under attention as well. In this way the society can be artificially and formally divided into classes or strata of interests able to express their major interests. An idea should be mentioned here, that in order to avoid the subordination of a class by another, several mechanisms could be invented.

I want to bring several thoughts about them.

The classes should be open, in order to be able to preserve the peaceful displacement of its members among the classes. This will make the buildings of classes strong and will preserve the representation of the interests of the classes, but not the individual interests instead of the ones of classes. A fact should be observed here, that the social development of a person being (for example) in class A, changes his interests and makes them alike to ones of (for example) B. So he should formally and really leave the class A and go to class B and express his "benefit" there. This gives the chance to make people active in policy, as well.

The next thing that should be paid attention on is the following. Because the place where it is mostly possible to express the social interests is the parliament, I think its institutions should be developed. In particular, it should have two chambers: the lower chamber should be organized by principle of classes, the higher–(for example) by principle of territory. The parties will get voices in the higher chamber. The juxtaposition of territorial and classificative principles will make the possibility of territorial and social representation of interests. Moreover, this will prevent the possible antagonisms.

This structure will protect the institutions of classes from exploitation by each other or parties. I cannot say who should get the primacy in the parliament–the higher or the lower chambers, but I can notice that the primacy of the one makes the existence of the other fictive. The democratic institutions should be developed and, maybe, *new institutions should be invented*.

However, this is just a supposition (theory) but it can be observed and developed in context with other ideas.

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are the best I think. (See history of Ancient Greek polices and Rome, especially the reforms of Solon, Likurgus, Servius Tullius et cetera).

<sup>28</sup> Ա. Ի Կրավչենկո. Սոցիոլոգիա. Ջանգալ-94. Երեւան. 2004. page 114.