

**A NEW CHALLENGE FOR CIVIC NATIONAL
INTEGRATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM RUSSIA.**

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Abstract:

Globalization is accepted mostly as a process which brings the erosion of principles of national sovereign state. This is but one consequence of Globalization. It would be more precise to say, that Globalization is a process, which caused a global shift in the system of national self-identification, which existed since the Westphalian period. For Europe it meant the erosion of a nation-state system and the search for new forms of all European integration. For USA it really meant overcoming borders of nation state in terms of political responsibility and economic interests. But for Russia, Globalization put forward a challenge of... civic national self-identification, which Russia never had in its history before! This is the paradox of Globalization. The analysis of this paradox and the threats coming out of such a contradictory situation is important not only for Russia, but also for all post-colonial and post-socialist countries, who lack the period of civic nation states in their history.

The article answers two main questions: what are the specifics of challenge of civic national integration under the conditions of Globalization in general and how this problem is seen from Russia.

Historically Russia transformed from a theocratic state directly into a secular empire, without passing through the stage of national civic transformation, when all forms of civic integration and social control of society over state should have been established. This caused a deep gap between the people and the bureaucratic elite, which namely privatized the state, using the society, as a means for economic and political boom on the international level. In such circumstances the success of the elite and its inclusion in world economic and cultural process was reached by the exclusion of the majority of population of the country from this process. This tendency was not new. It started at the end of the seventeenth century and now we can say that all the attempts to change the situation, including October Revolution 1917 couldn't overcome this deep social contradiction of Russia. Globalization contributed much to sharpen this illness. It aggravated rapid integration of the Russian elite into the global elite and the exclusion of Russian society from the global economic, social and cultural process. So, as a result of Globalization, Russia is "pregnant" with the very tough conflict of interests and very serious crisis of legitimacy of all forms and institutions of political power.

The urgency of the problem's solution is illustrated by the figures, by social, economic, cultural and demographic decline of society on the background of extreme growth of wealth and criminalization of elite, rushing into the global competition of wealth, by predatory exploiting natural resources of the country.

It is very important to understand, that in spite of all this, Russian society does not blame Globalization in all its problems. The perception of Globalization by Russians is quite ambivalent, they understand new perspectives and opportunities, that it can bring to the people, but they also understand, that the strategy and interest of existing political elite are not social, but private and do not coincide with the interests of society as much, as it should do.

In such a situation the political elite is looking for new forms of legitimating its power, beginning with the substitution of democratic procedures by administrative measures ("power vertical") and ending with the imitation of social contract by creating pseudo-civic institutions ("Social Chamber") and new total ideology ("national idea"). The society is also looking for the solution of the contradiction.

The question of who will win in this struggle will be crucial for the way, Russia enters the Global World.

Keywords: globalization, Russia, theocratic state, civic national integration, national self-identity, political opposition, secular empire, Russian political culture, post-communist state, coercive oligarchy, civic transformation, concept of national unity.

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A New Challenge for Civic National Integration: A Perspective from Russia.

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From Russia, the process and origins of globalization appear ambiguous. On one side, it is commonly accepted that Russia is a peripheral country and its role in globalization is as a supplier of raw materials to the developed countries and regions of the world. That is, the role of Russia in the process of globalization is very insignificant, and Russia is definitely not leading player in the globalization process. However, on the other side, we should not forget that the real and rapid development of the process of globalization as we see it now, has become possible because of ... no, not Russia but the Soviet Union, where Russia had been the centre. More precisely, globalization was possible because of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In broad terms, the crisis and dissolution of the Soviet system in general, and, in particular, the crisis of a socialist pole as an alternative to the liberal capitalism, marked the end of bipolar system and the beginning of globalization, or the neoliberal type of capitalist development. Thus, the Soviet Union and Russia played a crucial role as a trigger for the beginning of the process of globalization, and were responsible for the dynamism which we now observe.

The rapidly developing process of globalization has, in turn, become a new, grave challenge for Russia. This challenge makes it necessary for Russia to answer questions that it has either left unanswered or never had in its history. The most important of these questions is 'What is Russia?' Is it an Empire or is it a nation state? Is it a part of Europe or a part of Asia? Is it a self-sufficient power, which can create a geopolitical space and be its centre? Or is it a country that needs to join one of the existing geopolitical centres?

For Russia, this "confusion" is not only a problem of geopolitical theory. Indeed, this is a core issue of public life, and a main reason for its crisis. Thirteen years after the dissolution of the USSR, two-thirds of the respondents in the Saratov region (the central part of Russia) still name the USSR as their motherland. And 51 percent of respondents have supported the idea of the reestablishment of the Soviet Union (See Velikaya, 2005). The reason for this is not imperial ambitions (although these ambitions may belong to the political elite). Rather, the reason for such attitudes is the deep crisis in Russian society. Russian society is still not

able to address the main challenge which globalization poses for Russia, namely, the challenge of defining a new national and political self-identity. In this paper, we will try to understand why this challenge is so difficult for Russia.

Let us start with definition of globalization. There are a number of definitions, but they all, to some extent, boil down to “globalization is the process whereby state-centric agencies and terms of reference are dissolved in favour of a structure of relations between different actors operating in a context which is truly global rather than merely international” (Evans and Newhman, 1998: 20). Thus, the course of development in the international arena is pointing to the erosion of state sovereignty and the idea of the nation-state. However, this tendency is the opposite of the direction of Russian development which is towards the creation of a national civil society, a society which Russia has never had before.

This is a unique characteristic of the Russian path in the modern epoch. In its past, Russia has been a theocratic state and then a secular empire, but it has never undergone the stage of a national civic secular state. As a result, society has not experienced a transformation from that of an object to that of a subject in the political process, and the state has not changed from being a goal to becoming an instrument of public interest protection. In the West, democratic political institutions and social practices were naturally established and developed during this transformation. These institutions and practices have been very important forms of political participation and civil control over state power in a framework of the civic secular state.

Russia missed the natural development of a national civil state for a number of historical reasons and has been trying to either fill this “gap” in its socio-political history or, more usually, choosing its own specific path of development. This specific path has been an attempt to create a national state without a civil society and without a real transformation of the state to an instrument for the realization of public interest. This is an historical challenge, one which has been amplified by the reality of globalization in Russia.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet system, globalization has affected forms of national self-identity and legitimacy of power, which had been long-settled since imperial times.

Furthermore, the unsolved problem of national civic transformation in Russia is again coming to the fore today. Today everybody understands that if this problem is not solved within a short period of time, the further collapse of Russia will be inevitable given the reality of processes of globalization. Alarming signals are obvious for Russia.

Alarming signals for Russia.

The first and very important negative sign of the effects of globalization on Russia is a significant increase of inequality. The Gini coefficient increased from 0.26 at the end of the Soviet era to 0.5 now. This situation in Russia is reflected by high concentrations of wealth and high levels of poverty. Russia has the highest number of billionaires in relation to its GDP – 36 billionaires for US\$ 458 billion. In other words, 36 individuals in Russia own US\$110 billion, equivalent to 24% of GDP (Forbes, 2004: 47). The majority of the billionaires are from Moscow – 33 out of 36. Even New York has only 31 (ibid: 48). The majority of the Russian population is far from being rich and 30 million people, or approximately one-fifth of the total population, live below the state determined poverty line (EIU, 2004). The income gap is unprecedented – the richest 10% of Russian population share 50% of GDP, whereas the poorest 10% share only 6% (CIA, 2004).

Globalization and the openness of Russia have not stimulated technical progress. On the contrary, globalization has further destroyed the economy, a process which has been ongoing since the late Brezhnev era. The structure of exports has changed since the dissolution of the USSR, with Russia increasingly becoming dependent on exports of natural resources. From 1992 there was a threefold increase of exports of raw materials. Oil and gas still dominate here and constitute three-quarters of total exports (Dzarasov, 2005: 119). According to the World Economic Forum, in 2004 Russia was ranked 70th out of 104 countries for its competitiveness. In Soviet times, the state created 1,500-2000 new industrial enterprises every five years. During the “reforms”, the state withdrew from this role and the net number of new state enterprises was zero (ibid: 141). The deterioration of equipment is dangerously high. In the Soviet era, the average age of equipment was 8-10 years. Now it has increased to 20 years, which has resulted in an increase in man-caused catastrophes such as industrial accidents.

The rapid and spontaneous movement of the country towards integration with the global capitalist system has not increased labour productivity or product quality. Privatization of the majority of public enterprises, conducted under the leadership of global financial institutions, has resulted in an inefficient distribution of public treasures between a limited number of global “bubble scheme” participants. Today the fact is that 500 families in Russia are successors and owners of all public properties, which were created during the years of hard work of the entire population. This fact has led to the situation to where almost all surplus flows into the pockets of new owners for their personal needs (Menshikov, 2004: 261). Even the officially recorded personal expenditures of the richest Russian enterprise owners have constituted 12 per cent of GDP. To compare, dividends of the biggest US corporations constitute no more than 5 per cent of GDP (ibid 41).

All of the above have led to a rapid shrinking of the Russian home market, even in comparison to Soviet times. For instance, the level of personal consumption in Soviet times was 45% of GDP. This does not include Soviet social welfare, which added an additional 38%. Today, the share of personal consumption in GDP is approximately 49% of GDP but government purchases have fallen to 17% (ibid 256). This is leading to a dangerous conflict between home and foreign markets and an over-reliance on net exports which account for 18% of GDP.¹ The Russian “globalizing” elite is far from sharing the same interests as Russian society. In fact, the elite does not need this society anymore and society is becoming a burden for it.

A few decades ago, Stalin suggested, “if there is no person, there is no problem”. This expression may be reasonably applied to the demographic situation in the modern neoliberal Russia. The death rate is higher than the birth rate, and the gap is dangerously widening. In 1970, there were 14.6 births and 8.7 deaths per every 1000 people. In 2002, these numbers were 9.8 and 16.3 respectively (Russian Statistical Bureau, 2003).

¹ The remaining 16% of GDP is the share of gross investment.

The list of Russian losses should be continued with the colossal capital flight from Russia, significant brain drain, destruction of world famous science schools, the degradation of the system of education and increasing illiteracy, the dissolution of social welfare and healthcare, and the erosion of Russian culture and spirituality.

Immorality is becoming the main principle for success in modern Russia. As a result, corruption is worsening at all levels of power. In 2004, Russia was 90th out of 140 countries for its corruption level, and was ranked as one of most corrupt countries in Europe. Worse situations were observed only in Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Moldova, and Ukraine².

One of the results of the rise in corruption has been the fusion of power between commercial and criminal structures. This corrupt elite has led to political feuding, which is, in turn, causing ethnic and religious conflicts. As a result, Russian society in general is not stable. In the unstable reality, the elite is becoming less controlled by society, and authoritarian tendencies are becoming stronger.

One of the leading Russian economists and a formerly active proponent of market reforms, S. Menshikov, suggests in his latest book, which analyzes Russian capitalism in the era of globalization, that (2004: 422) the “Russian experience has not proved that capitalist methods of economic organization do not have any visible advantages over the state command economy of the Soviet time”, and that (ibid 48) “the majority in the Forbes list have been the successors of the USSR’s natural resources and enterprises”. The Russian “peculiarity” of global capitalism is very simple – on one side, Russia is a source of the accumulation of capital, but on the other side, foreign countries, not Russia, are the main places of its deposit and spending (ibid 72).

Does this all mean that Russian society is rejecting, and opposing, globalization? To answer this question, let us look at the attitudes of Russian society towards globalization.

Attitudes of Russian society toward globalization

² See www.transparency.org

According to a 2005 survey, about half the respondents (46%) see globalization as a means for the further redistribution of the world resources in favour of strong and rich countries. 36% of respondents consider globalization as a positive process of spreading science and technology all over the world. 24% of respondents think that globalization is a process of increasing the power of TNCs. And only 22% of respondents say that globalization is a process of creating a global society (Levashov, 2005: 17). These results suggest that for Russia, globalization is not a form of erosion of power of nation-states, but it is a form of the power of the strong over the weak.

In the same survey, 59% of respondents have named increasing poverty in Russia as the main problem of globalization. The second negative outcome of globalization, pointed out by 45% of respondents, is increasing infringement of human rights (ibid 18). This finding is interesting because human rights were one of the main slogans used to support globalization in Russia. Finally, 44% of respondents believe that globalization has created problems of environmental degradation in Russia (ibid 18).

In answering the question of how to find ways to solve the problems caused by globalization, Russians do not appeal to international institutions. Only 13% of respondents believe that creating effective international regulatory organizations might help (ibid 18). This is an expected result. *For Russian society, the negative outcomes of globalization are, first of all, the result of the inefficiency of the Russian state itself.* The state, not globalization per se, is the source of all problems for ordinary Russians. Despite the wealth of untapped resources, Russia's inefficient government is not able to protect its citizens from poverty and overexploitation. The state is also unable to protect human rights and the dignity of the nation in the international arena. Instead, it allows the looting of country's resources without concern for Russia's future, as well as ignoring the well-being of its society.

In its perception of globalization per se, Russian society is ambivalent. Russians do not only see the problems but they also realize the new perspectives and opportunities globalization brings. In surveys, 43% of respondents answered positively the question of whether they and their families have benefited from globalization, whereas 44% of respondents had a negative

answer (ibid 19). Only 28% of respondents agreed that overall, globalization had brought positive perspectives for human development (ibid 19). However, this is with regards to the current situation. Only 18% of respondents have extended their pessimism to the future (ibid 20). These results show that overall, *Russian society understands the necessity of the further integration of Russia into the global world, and considers this process as positive and as opening new opportunities. However, society is not satisfied with forms and methods this integration has taken to date.*

Which forms of global integration are preferred by Russians? The most common answer is that Russia should become a centre for different nations, as the Soviet Union was. However, the number of respondents with this opinion decreased from 44% in 1992 to 32% in 2004. Only 13% in 1992 responded that Russia should remain in its national borders. In 2004, the number of respondents with this opinion increased significantly to 28%. Concurrently, the pessimistic prognosis of respondents regarding the further deterioration of conditions in Russia with globalization has fallen from 18% in 1992 to 12% in 2002 (ibid 20). This indicates that the national self-identity of Russians is changing over time. More and more people accept the idea of integrating with the global system from the existing Russian base. However, respondents do not have a clear view on long-term perspectives. As a result, the majority of Russians have not demonstrated confidence about a stable future. Society has its doubts regarding the state's potential. Respondents have listed the following obstacles for adequate entering global processes by Russia: social problems; level and quality of life; national economy; and the system of education. Ensuring human rights has reached fifth place in this list (ibid 22).

Let us now see how the state is reacting to the problems identified by Russian society.

Globalization and the Russian State.

The perception of society by the state is very specific in Russia. On one side, during the entire history of Russia, society has supported the rise of the state power. On the other side, *Russian society always suffered from it's own state, as the state has always taken the role of guarding and supervising society. The state pretended to control all spheres of life, and tried*

to paralyze any attempts *by* society to become strong, to form alternative political movements and *to develop various forms of* national civic integration.

At the same time, the Russian state has never accepted such practices as against society or “antisocial”. Instead, it has claimed that this is “a peculiarity of Russian political culture”, according to which Russian society has been politically naïve and inexperienced, and, consequently, cannot fully realize its own interests and goals. The society needs the state, which is able to act in support of the main interests of this society. In return for state leadership, society agrees to be unified. Facing challenges of... globalization this time (before it had been fascism, Tatars, Polish, French, internal enemies, and so forth), Russia needs this unity. However, the state is not able to formulate the specific challenges of globalization and, consequently, cannot explain the necessity of national unity to face globalization. The solution to national unity is being sought in the imported slogan of the need to fight “international terrorism”. This slogan is also convenient for the Russian elite, which can now easily integrate into different global segments.

The main feature of the state’s political concept of “national unity” is a thesis about the non-necessity and inadmissibility of real political opposition. A vast number of ideologists are trying to prove that Russia is a country which is originally disposed toward authoritarianism and that democracy is not only non-understandable in Russia but also bad for the country. To illustrate this inclination of Russians to slavery, ideologists either recall Stalin’s prison camps or, depending on the context, appeal to the Russian Orthodox soul, which is tolerant to coercion; moreover, the Orthodox soul is often enjoying it. This ideology also highlights a special Russian patriotism, sacrificial in its nature and different from other nations’ patriotism. Russians do not only have to tolerate and accept the power of the state, they also have to like it. This is the historical and ideological foundation of what modern Russian propaganda is appealing to.

The irrational attitude towards power is an important resource used in Russian *elite’s* PR. This explains the fact that during the Presidential election campaign, the main candidate – current President of Russia (Putin) – had purposefully not participated with other candidates

in any political discussions, and had not introduced his Programme. He staked his campaign on his charisma and on the blind trust of people.

This cynical approach is convenient for those who want to use the political moment and disappear, but it is not enough to remain in long-term power. If the real interests of the power do not coincide with the interests of society, charisma and trust will not help. Unfortunately, the divergence of interests is obvious today.

How has globalization influenced the divergence of interests of those in power and the rest of society in Russia?

At the end of the 17th century, in order to become an exporter of wheat for European markets, the Russian bureaucratic elite applied different forms of non-economic coercion to society with the reintroduction and expansion of serfdom, a trend which stood in contrast to that in western Europe where the peasantry were being 'freed' from the land (Kagarlitsky, 2004). This was the first time that Russia had tried a unique scheme of globalization – a scheme in which the elite thrived from its inclusion in the world economic processes at the same time as the majority of population was excluded from such processes.

This divergence was overcome by the catastrophe of 1917 when society tried to overcome the contradiction between the elite and the rest of the population. However, the result was that Russia became isolated from the rest of the world, and market mechanisms within the country were distorted.

The Russian model of development was appropriately known as “communist” or “socialist” because two communist principles were the base of the model: first, a communist principle of investing into the future unconnected to profitability; and second, a communist principle of distribution aimed at eradicating inequality and creating social harmony. The Soviet system, however, had one very important disadvantage. The state, not civil organizations, had concentrated all of the functions of management and control in its hands, proclaiming any criticism as “antinational” and “antisocial”. This provided the elite with a superior uncontrolled position, completely isolated from society, and from which it degenerated.

By the middle of the 1980s, the privileges of the elite were threatened as a result of the aging and death of the heads of the elite families, the majority of whom came to power during the Stalinist 1930s. The deaths of clan leaders would have meant an end of perks and privileges for all family members because new, relatively young party leaders could have debarred them from elitist or privileged entitlements. The only way for the post-communist elite to keep power was to convert power into property.

After 1945, the sphere of foreign economic activity had been the main place of work for the children and grandchildren of the ruling elite. After the state's monopoly on foreign trade was abrogated in 1987, the post-communist elite had received an opportunity to grow rich exploiting the price differences of raw materials on the internal (socialist) and external markets. The global centres of power and elites have also benefited from this changed path in Russia, and consequently, supported new Russian "businessmen". The further development of Russia has followed the scenario of the Russian elite entering the global market accompanied by the concurrent exclusion of Russian society from this market and by destroying the internal Russian market.

This is not to say that only the Russian elite was interested in the transformation of the Soviet model. Russian society, tired from isolation and total control of the state within the country, also supported these processes. Having used citizens' support of globalization, the Russian elite has integrated into the global system. But as soon as its power became established, the elite has attempted to isolate the majority of population from the global processes and to take absolute control over society. The only difference with Soviet times is that the Russian elite now has the West to support it. The modern Russian elite has learnt very well how to satisfy the interests of global financial structures and, without a doubt, will keep receiving *carte blanche* to conduct antisocial policies within Russia.

What are these antisocial policies? They lie in: the privatization of natural resources and other strategically important sectors of economy; the destruction of the system of social welfare, education and health care; capital flight from Russia; unclear and complicated laws and regulations, which give an opportunity for corruption; ungrounded international

borrowing, which will have to be paid off by future generations; and the lobbying interests of international corporations, which are destroying our environment and depraving our youth. But the above list does not reflect the most negative outcomes.

The main danger is that the Russian elite is becoming strongly attached to the global financial and political centres of power. The further these processes are developed, the less legitimate Russian power becomes. In 1999, the coercive oligarchy of Vladimir Putin succeeded the commercial oligarchy of Yeltsin's era. Has it changed anything for the country?

Yes, it has changed a few things. Society's perception of Putin's regime is contradictory. On one side, this oligarchy is more patriotic and seems to be more protective of state sovereignty. The coercive oligarchy does not stand in the relationship to state power as it did in the commercial oligarchy. The commercial oligarchy and state power were linked but separate; the present coercive oligarchy *is* the state itself, that is, the staff of the Administration of the President has concurrently been holding leading positions in the main resource-based industries. The position of commercial oligarchs today is limited by the rules of the coercive oligarchy – business oligarchs can continue their activities only if they accept these rules.

On the other side, the interests of the coercive oligarchy still do not coincide with the interests of society. The antisocial character of the Russian elite has not changed. But using the slogan of the defence of the state interests, the new elite has manufactured a way of preventing public protests. Even shrinking democracy is presented as a benefit of strengthening control over society. The new political elite has replaced democratic procedures by administrative measures - the principle of "power vertical" – with the Presidential appointment of regional governors. Furthermore, the coercive oligarchy is limiting any movements for creating new political parties by attempting to put all levels of legislatures under the control of executive power, which makes new parties dependent not on society but on state power. The coercive oligarchy is also increasing its control over the mass media.

At the same time, the state is preserving some of the rules of the game by abiding by international norms for democratic behaviour. Firstly, civic institutions are allowed to participate in consultations in the Civic Chamber established and subsidized by the President Administration. Secondly, the official constitution recognizes and upholds democratic rights and freedoms. Thirdly, the President himself is head of a few social programmes. Fourthly, the machinery of the law is able to conduct investigations into corruption. Finally, the coercive oligarchy, unlike the commercial oligarchy, is better able to negotiate on various issues with regional leaders. Despite these positive aspects, the fact is that without a coincidence of interests with those of society, power is not stable. Furthermore, this instability may become dangerous in the longer term.

Lessons for Russia from Globalization

The main difference between the current globalization and imperialism is that in the latter, social contradictions mostly lie between nation-states, whereas in the former, they tend to be between the global elite and the global civic society, even though neither the global elite nor global civic society are monolithic in terms of their structure, interests, and their degree of influence in the world.

Confrontation between the global elite and global society is not even, but the tendency is that the global elite is winning over society. Society's "losses" are different in different world regions. In some places, it takes the form of corruption, loss of social welfare, or a crisis of democratic institutions. In other places, it is accompanied by the rapid degradation of social cohesion and social values and by economic, social, cultural, and demographic catastrophes. Overall, it should be argued that degrading processes are present, to a different extent, in different regions of the world. The extent to which social degradation takes place depends on the degree of civil society development at the time of globalization.

For those countries where civil society is already developed, globalization is a threat to mechanisms of societal influence over the political processes. Conversely, countries where societies had not transformed from objects to subjects of political activities, have suffered the most from globalization. These societies are deficient in the degree of internal civic

integration and political participation. In short, for countries without a developed civil society, globalization means the destruction of the society itself.

Russia belongs to the second group of countries. Its peculiarity is that globalization has not only contributed to the slowing of economic and social development but has also led to a national catastrophe. One cannot compare an increasing level of illiteracy in countries where the literacy rate was originally low, with a country like Russia, which not only had a 100% literacy rate but only two decades ago was also a leader in the world of university degrees per capita. In the same relative terms, this argument is also relevant to inequality, unemployment, and other social indicators. Russia and other post-Soviet countries are unique – they had reached a level of industrial development comparable to the West, but it has been nearly totally destroyed by globalization. Why?

Russia in the twentieth century can be characterized as moving from a semi-theocratic state to an industrial state, but one which had not developed in either period a civil society. Soviet totalitarianism was the last opportunity for Russia to compete with developed civil societies. The strict hierarchy of societies in the modernist era had forced national elites to correlate their egotistical interests with the interests of the societies that they controlled.

Eroding nation-state sovereignty, globalization has offered unprecedented scope for the global integration of elites from different states. Entering the community of the global elite, national elites are presented with the opportunity of political and economic survival without the need for support from their national societies. Although the problem of legitimating their power still exists for them, it is becoming a question of political PR only. In such a situation, elites are not concerned about the real basis for countries' prosperity. Instead, they are trying to create different ways of successfully imitating "social consent". A number of mythological slogans, such as "international terrorism" or "national idea", are becoming a basis for developing these schemes.

One should not forget that the elite is not trying to solve social problems; it is rather using real problems as a means of legitimating the power of the global elite. Bureaucratic

manipulations of public opinion can never lead to a real national idea which may be transferred into the process of civic integration.

Thus, separating the prosperity of national elites from the prosperity of national societies, globalization has erased the last connection between public interests and the interests of the corporate elite. But this connection was a base for social progress in regions without developed civil societies and public participation mechanisms. When national elites are becoming more and more dependent on the global elite, rather than on national societies, it puts the survival of societies at a high degree of risk.

The question is *why has Russian society, which had been able to create a mighty state and to protect the country from a number of invaders during a thousand years, not been able to protect itself from the destroying power of the Russian elite in the era of globalization?*

A Russian peculiarity is that Russia is “the world of worlds”.³ That is, Russia synthesizes patterns of development from different regions of the world. This explains the fact that in the process of civil society development, the country faces obstacles inherent in the post-colonial world, even though Russia had never been a real colony.

As an industrial country, Russia has faced the same challenges of national civic integration as developed Western countries have. These challenges are: the crisis of formal political institutions; the crisis of traditional forms of social integration related to the rise of the middle class in the late 20th century; and the crisis of traditional forms of democratic political participation.

As a post-socialist country, Russia has faced the problem of unprotected civic sovereignty in a socialist state, both theoretically and practically. Marxism-Leninism did not tolerate social self-identity, horizontal integration of society, social and political activities within society, and, as a result, had not allowed public control over the elite. According to Marxist-Leninist ideology, a main goal for society was to expropriate power and pass it to the “party of the

³ An expression of a famous Russian historian and publicist of the middle of the 20th century, Mikhail Gefter.

working class". Concurrently with the power, the state had gathered all political and social functions including the function of public control. The society had dissolved in the reality of the totalitarian state.

However, the main obstacle for developing civil society in Russia is that the country is not only post-socialist but post-colonial as well. From the end of the 17th century, Russia had been a colony and a metropolis at the same time. The Russian elite had played the role of a metropolis whereas the majority of population had been in colonial dependence on the elite. This was a peculiarity of the Russian empire. The majority of the population had not been a part of metropolis, and, as a result, Russian society has inherited traditional post-colonial patterns.

The main feature of post-colonial society is the incompleteness of the processes of civic national integration due to the incompleteness of the forming of the national civic state in the period of colonialism. The missed stage of the national civic state is a serious obstacle for forming civil societies in postcolonial regions. The situation is even more difficult for Russia as it has faced all three types of problems (industrial, post-socialist and post-colonial).

These are problems common for Russia and to other world regions. But there is also a specific Russian obstacle to forming civic activity in the country. This obstacle is rooted in the political culture based on Russian Orthodox religious traditions. A specific type of Orthodox personality is hardly compatible with civil and political institutions of the Western type, which are based on absolutely different types of individuality.

Conclusion.

The first and main conclusion is that, in order to be able to face the challenges of globalization, there is no alternative to the development of civil society and civic forms of social activity. If nations want to survive they must form civil societies. Here one should agree with those who insist that Russia may certainly learn from Western experience. But the second conclusion is that Russia will never be able to repeat Western experience exactly. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, our forms of civic activities are different from Western ones because they have to coincide with Russian political culture and the Russian type of personality. Secondly, Russia has to form a civil society in the period of globalization, that is, faced with the reality of the erosion of the sovereignty of nation-states. Furthermore, globalization is neoliberal in its character; therefore, it is in contradiction to the processes of civic national integration. An important instrument for dividing global civil society is fostering intra- and international conflicts under patriotic and religious slogans. This is very common for regions without developed civil societies. A tactic of the global neoliberal elite is a substitution of civic national self-identity with national-chauvinism, fascism, and religious fundamentalism.

The question is what to do when faced with such a reality? Should international civil society “wait” until “backward” post-socialist and post-colonial regions overcome the problem of civic national self-identity? Does this mean that global civil society will only form when new “segments” join it after their civic maturing?

Not at all! This is a mistake and a dangerous strategy. Global elites are rapidly integrating, which makes globalization of civic processes difficult. Integration of global elites, by destroying social and economic infrastructure, is leaving little chance for civic development in post-colonial and post-socialist regions. Global civil society should not wait until these regions mature. They will never mature, and time is working against them. Instead, global civil society should influence civic processes in post-socialist and post-colonial countries by stimulating and supporting their civic development.

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