

Point of View

Religiousness and social differentiation are named among the reasons why nationalism is one of the most forceful social phenomena of the past 150 years. A special accent is made on the theological aspects of group behavior.

Nationalism: The Goal or a Means to an End?

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Studies of national or, more broadly, collective behavior overlook what I think are two substantial points. First, as French sociologist S. Moscovici noted repeatedly [1], the approach to collective behavior (with mass psychology being the object of study and the crowd being the unit of observation) has made poor progress since G. Le Bon, G. Tarde, A. Vigouroux, P. Juquelier, and others introduced the notion at the junction of the 19th and 20th centuries [2]. Second, the main accent in politology, political sociology, and even in political marketing is laid on the rational (psychological and social) determinant of behavior, while the ethological aspect of the matter does not get its due attention (although some relevant studies do exist, e.g., see [3]). I intend to consider the above two points in my examination of the phenomenon of national behavior.

The social phenomenon of nationalism emerged in the second half of the 19th century [4]. Leaving aside the idealist concepts of the self-birth and self-development of the national idea, one of the most convincing reasons for its appearance is the institutionalization of the national bourgeoisie (interests of national capital, protection of the home market, economic competition with other countries, national currency, and the like) and, accordingly, the emergence of a national intelligentsia to serve and promote the interests of that bourgeoisie.

However convincing this explanation may sound, it leaves a feeling of deficiency and incompleteness. Two other factors should be invoked to extend the analytical framework: religiousness and social differentiation.

But before going on to our main subject, let me try to define nationalism (no single point of view has yet been worked out on this score) and outline the scheme of social evolution.

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR AND NATIONALISM

Collective behavior is the coordinated behavior of a group of subjects with a single determining tendency, that is, with common goals, motivations, and so on [5].

In terms of the cognitive and emotional structure of collective behavior, it may be described as an aggregate of notions, sentiments, and actions that joins people on a certain basis into a separate group and (in case of a deficit of resources) opposes them to all other groups with the purpose of redistributing goods and benefits in their own favor. If there is no deficit, and intergroup competition on that score does not ensue, the group's purpose is to secure more effective satisfaction of its members' needs in opposition to or in interaction with the outside environment.

It must be stressed that a group springs up and exists to secure a more effective satisfaction of the needs of its members and to increase the aggregate volume of benefits, among which we may single out such tangible ones as power, territory, money, commodities, and the like, and such as offer psychological comfort: the notion of exclusiveness, elimination of fears, realization of social instincts, etc.

Types of collective behavior may be subdivided into spontaneous, semiorganized, and organized behavior. Among the latter we may single out religious, tribal (blood-related clans), territorial (territorial clans), social estate and professional, ethnic (nationalist), class, supraclass within the state, statewide (national), and demographic (women's, youth) movements (parties). As used here, the word "group" above all connotes the forms of collective behavior listed above.

Two factors are important in the forming of a group, the agent of collective behavior. The first is ethological (basic). This refers to the social instinct of every individual, the genetically implicit striving to be member of a group. Like any other genetic program of behavior, this striving has no definite address—it is simply a desire without concrete form and content. A superstructure arises upon it—a certain signal or mark (or an aggregate of marks)—which starts up the mechanism of group behavior. The purposes of the signal are, first, to outline the properties and boundaries of the group and thereby determine those who belong and those who do not; second, to spark or consolidate the individual's appreciation of being (or being capable of being) a member of the group in question; third, to impart to the individual's psyche the appropriate group ideology. To

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Social evolution depending on system-forming group associations

Types of system-forming group associations					
→	→	→	→	→	→
Tribal (blood-related) clans	Territorial clans	a) Social estates b) Professional clans	Classes	Social class associations (parties, trade unions, and others)	Supraclass parties and movements within the state
Respective types of social organization					
nomadic tribe	tribe of settled farmers	feudal principality	monarchic (oligarchic) state	industrial state	information society

put it differently, these purposes further the social self-identification of the individual and the identification and ideologization of the group.

Traditionally, the group ideology is conceived as an idea which impels one of the forms of collective behavior listed above in order to create a certain social situation. Rewording the Marxist proposition, we may say that an idea which takes possession of the masses becomes an ideology. In this sense, for example, Bolshevism (and even more broadly Marxism) is a pragmatic interpretation of the ideas of Hegel combined with Campanella's social construct.

Group ideology reposes on the notion of the group's exclusiveness. This is an attributive property of every group consciousness [6, pp. 80-81]. In the national sphere, the phenomenon is expressed through the so-called feeling of national pride. The individual is proud of belonging to a specific nation which, in his opinion, possesses some highly valued exclusive qualities. The spectrum of these qualities can be very wide: ancient origins, contribution to world civilization, martial victories, famous countrymen, and the like.

The logic here is that the group differs favorably from others in certain respects (way of life, traditions, values, profession of specific social ideas, creed, looks, and so on). Hence, its members are cleverer, more honest, and more attractive than all the others. By this logic, the prevailing state of affairs is incorrect (unfair, unreasonable, immoral) and must be changed. The group will do so and will be better off (possibly, everybody will benefit).

On the strength of the above, nationalism may be defined as a form of collective behavior based on the notion of exclusiveness and the consequent striving for redistributing benefits in its own favor [6, p. 80].

Now, let us see how group behavior may be related to social development.

CLASSIFICATION OF STAGES OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION

There are two approaches to classifying stages of social development: the formational (by successive social systems) and civilizational. To definite periods, I proceeded from Emile Durkheim's principle—explain the social with the social—and took the social groups

which were uppermost and system-forming in the respective periods of society's evolution as the basis for singling out stages. I worked with the reservation, of course, that the proposed scheme reflects the global tendency only, that is, the ideal model. In real life there are countless deviations, for humanity develops along more than one line.

The following system-forming social groups may be singled out in the evolution of society: blood-related clans (tribes); territorial clans; social estates and professional clans; classes; social class associations (parties, trade unions, and so on); and supraclass parties and movements within the state. These dominant groups formed respective types of communities: the nomadic tribe; the tribe of settled farmers; the feudal principality; the monarchic (oligarchic) state; the industrial state; and the information society (see table).

As I see it, two factors helped to make nationalism a social phenomenon. Let us examine this at greater length.

CRISIS OF RELIGIOUSNESS AND CLASS STRUGGLE

In dealing with the crisis of religion, I refer mainly to the European type of civilization, to the Christian development of the Old Testament. The Asiatic type of civilization (the Moslem world) and the Islamic interpretation of Old Testament monotheism, I think, call for special study. Islam, as we know, regulates a substantial area of people's daily life and is apprehended by them not only as a religion but also as an element of the national way of life. As a result, Asiatic religiousness and nationalism operate differently and stimulate each other more than is the case in the Christian world.

The most important functions of religion are social, essentially regulating relations between people; cognitive, explaining the "physical" picture of the world; and psychological, assuring psychological comfort, a sense of belonging to the select, less fear of death, and psychological succor.

V.I. Garadja notes that public opinion polls and analyses of the statistics and dynamics of religiousness reflect a longterm downgrade tendency, showing that the influence of religion on the life of contemporary society is declining [7, p. 174]. It is safe to assume that

the number of believers (in absolute figures) decreased in the process of social evolution, at first gradually and then ever more rapidly. While the religiousness of tribes professing primitive pagan religions was practically total, sociological studies show that today, in advanced societies, the share of true believers has dropped and fluctuates between 20 and 30% [7, 8].

The term true believers is used here in a strictly canonical sense. It applies to those who know the canonical texts and, in a manner of speaking, live within the religious picture of the world, possess religious feeling (a sense of faith), and rigidly observe the respective rites. I might note in this connection that the present infatuation with religion among Russians (from 1988 to 1993 the percentage of those polled who said they were believers went up from 18.6 to 40% [7, p. 193]) is not in substance a religious renaissance. Evidently, we can speak of traditions and rituals required in any society as social stabilizers and bearers of ultimate values. Here we would do well to recall R. Bella's observation that secularization entails not the elimination of religion as such but change in its structure and role [9].

And in many ways a similar pseudoreligious boom was observed in the United States after World War II. It was a peculiar form of group (nationwide) unity (a normal reaction to the war, an intergroup conflict) rather than the result of God-seeking impulses, which prompted its description as a specific form of religious nationalism [8, p. 131].

There are reasons for the crisis of the traditional church. Under the persistent onslaught of capital and the revolutions of the old precapitalist regime, writes Moscovici, the stable world of family, neighborly relations, and village life began to fall apart. Its disintegration also pulled down the traditional religious pillars [1, p. 46].

The progress of natural science caused a crisis of religion's cognitive function, for theologians were compelled to acknowledge fundamental scientific achievements that were contrary to religious dogma and to modify their teaching accordingly.

Owing to the powerful growth of state institutions and power structures, the social (regulating) function of religion has also declined visibly in the past century and a half. Nowadays, relations in advanced countries are regulated more by legislation and lawyers than by religion and the Pantocrator. Even morality, traditionally the domain of the Church, is being secularized by the idea of general human (that is, not specifically theological) values, which is winning ever more adherents. Hence, the psychological component of religion is no longer as effective as it was. The individual of today finds it hard to be a true canonical believer and to receive psychological succor from an institution whose fundamental elements (the social and cognitive components) do not appear altogether convincing.

It is important to note here that the first signs of the cognitive crisis of religion came into evidence during

the Renaissance, while its most corrosive phase began in the mid-19th century impelled by the precipitous progress of natural science.

The crisis of religion's social function, on the other hand, may be traced to the declining role of the Church in regulating individual and public relations due to the development of democratic forms of government in which the part of the Church is reduced to a minimum. It is only right to say in this context that democracy is ruinous for traditional religions. The past hundred or hundred and fifty years in which the present-day democratic forms of government evolved comprise the present phase of the crisis of traditional religiousness.

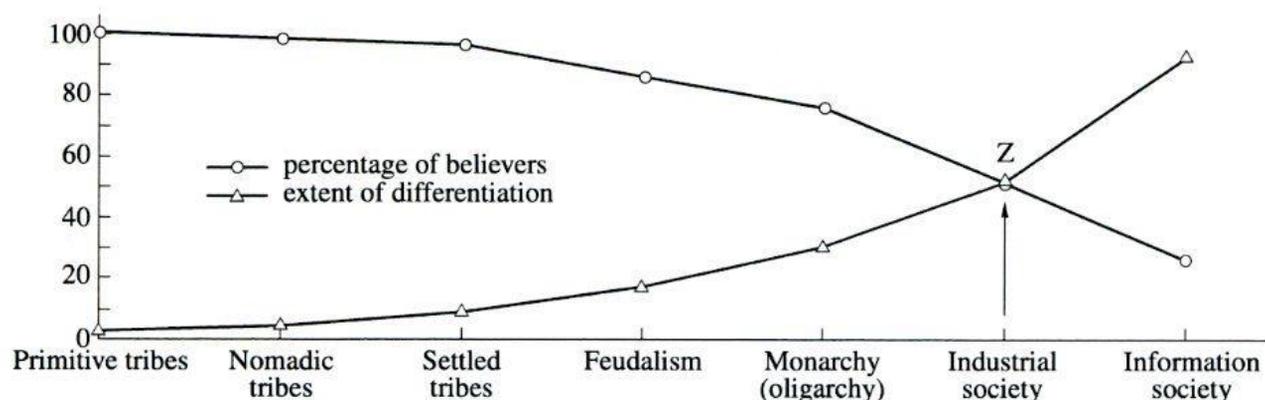
The cognitive and social crisis of religion is illustrated in the figure. The magnitudes describing the phenomenon reflect only the general tendency, and no claim can be made as to their accuracy.

Now, let us go on to the class struggle or, which is the same thing, to society's differentiation by incomes. Essentially, the interaction of the aggregate of groups of people comprising society is a division of the social (above all productive) functions among groups with the purpose of satisfying the requirements of each of them more effectively. Every social group (class) strives to redistribute goods and benefits in its own favor and endeavors to change the terms of the social contract. This striving may be called class struggle.

So far, we evidently cannot say conclusively how much the property status of working people is improved through class struggle and to what extent it is simply the result of the development of society's productive forces. In all probability, class struggle expedites such improvement. The Socialists (Communists), for example, campaigned for a ten-hour (and later an eight-hour) working day, a weekly day off (later two days), paid leave, sick pay, and disability and old-age pensions. These demands were eventually met, but would they have been met if there had been no class struggle? They probably would have been, but much later. Marx is doubtless right that the volume of consumption depends on the volume of production. But the question of how the intensity of the class struggle, that is, the competition between groups, affects the working people's level of consumption, that is, the development of the productive forces, calls for further study.

In any case, the confrontation of group (class) interests generated by the differentiation of incomes has existed at all times. The social-class tensions in society are sparked by the following interconnected parameters: the number of social strata (groups); the social distance between them (incomes being the primary criterion); and the vertical social (status) mobility, that is, the possibility and dynamism of tangible movement from lower to higher groups and vice versa.

The fewer the social strata, the greater the distance between them, and the slighter the social mobility, the higher the tension in society. These components of intergroup tension are fully enough reflected in the



Changes in level of religiousness and income differentiation in the course of social evolution.

indicator of income differentiation (in our case, the number of social strata and the number of comprising income groups) used in our study.

In step with the development of society, that is, with the advance from primitive communities to those of today, differentiation increased. In our figure, this is indicated by the change in income differentiation (the increasing number of income groups) in the process of social evolution. Let me warn, however, that the figures in the graph showing this change are hypothetical and should be interpreted as a scale of ratings rather than of relations.

Up to a certain moment (industrial society in our figure), the growing differentiation by incomes led to mounting social tension. As a consequence, class ideology took deeper root. But after passing the critical point (in the figure it is given under the letter Z) in the transition to what is called information society, the social distance between the strata tends to shrink. The social tension slackens, the class ideology loses much of its relevance, and the class movements scale down to the level of trade unions. With the income of, say, a highly skilled worker being greater than that of a medium-level manager and a high-ranking manager earning more than a petty or even medium-level entrepreneur, the boundaries between classes erode. Here, we can justifiably refer to a classless society in which the proletarian doctrine finds but feeble support in the social structure. It follows that in the transition to information society the global religious and class ideologies lose their former predominance.

Ethnic and statewide (national) ideologies resemble each other (although we speak of separatism in the former case and of patriotism in the latter), supraclass parties within the state are no more than a surrogate of collective behavior, demographic movements are of a sporadic nature, and movements crossing state borders are still foreign to the emotions of the masses. The cumulative result is that the ethnic ideology finds fertile soil and forges ahead. In effect, the citizen faces the choice between the ethnic (nationalist, racial) and the national (statewide, patriotic) ideas.

The declining role of the religious and class ideologies tends to facilitate the spread of the ethnic ideology because, among other things, the world religions and likewise the proletarian doctrine call for equality regardless of nationality (before God in the first case, and for natural, i.e., natural-science, reasons in the latter). And in a situation where their "internationalist" influence decreases, the ethnic idea with its main stress on national exclusiveness gains widespread popularity.

The crisis of religion and the increasing income differentiation stimulated the rise of nationalist ideology and nationalism as a pervasive form of collective behavior. This occurred in the phase of industrial society, at critical point Z (see the figure). In many respects, point Z appears to be a turning point in the development of human society.

The most fundamental content of the period mentioned above was its transition from the domination of intergroup competition (class struggle) to the domination of individual competition (man is to man a wolf). In other words, group unity (class solidarity) declines steeply in the information society setting. The boundaries between all existing groups become eroded, and the individual is unable fully to realize his or her fundamental human need of being member of a group. This results in greater stresses; a person's nervous system fails to cope with them; and deviant behavior such as drinking, drugs, violence, male impotence, and suicide becomes increasingly widespread. The level of individual crime increases, for group aggressiveness is more easily regulated than individual.

In the traditional society, these things were comparatively rare and, in fact, exceptional. Information society, however, generated them en masse. The individual lost his group; it had supported him, directed him, and given him a sense of belonging to a collective with its ideals and values. Weak, alone, crushed by the faceless immensity of the classless society, he is on the verge of anguish.

The other effect of the declining role of traditional types of collective behavior is the spontaneous emergence of surrogates—religious sects, mafia organiza-

tions, and various new social movements. This also applies to polytheism (simultaneous profession of more than one religion) and the heightened interest in esoteric things as an attempt to create pseudogroups, and so on. The social vacuum is filled by movements of sports club fans and pop music devotees.

Someone called hippies nestlings who fell out of their nest. And it is true that they lost their group sense and tried to regain it in artificially formed constructions. Under the circumstances, the nationalist idea may naturally be in great demand on the market of social ideologies.

It takes concrete architects and promoters of the nationalist idea to give impulse to ethnic movements. A considerable role, therefore, is played by leaders.

THE REFLEX OF POWER AND THE REFLEX OF SUBORDINATION

Our distant forebears formed packs because this secured a more effective satisfaction of their needs. But within packs there was always competition for better access to goods and benefits. The social principle that determines priorities among group members is called hierarchy (ethologists describe it as the first-bite principle). For biological reasons if nothing else, every member of the group wants to bite first, but some manage it and others do not.

The one who gets more automatically becomes the hierarch, a social regulator of the behavior of the others. And inasmuch as power is the chief and universal social resource that ensures better access to all other resources (food, sexual partner, comfort, and so on), the effectiveness of satisfying individual wants depends, among other things, on status (which is here examined only as a measure of the opportunity for influencing the behavior of other members of the community). Every subject strives to satisfy his/her wants more fully and to acquire high status as a member of the group. We may say, therefore, that satisfying one's wants more fully and having high status are synonymous. The link between effective satisfaction of vital needs and group status is none other than socialization. In step with biological evolution, the need for social status becomes an instinct, a genetically programmed element of behavior. In essence, the transformation of the protohuman into a social being means that it acquired the craving for status, including the power instinct.

The struggle for status within a group is everlasting. But among some subjects the craving for status is stronger and more successfully realized, and less so among others. The former constitute the category of leaders, of those who lead, and the latter the crowd, those who are led. To a large extent, however, the division into leaders and the crowd is no more than conditional, for often a member of the crowd is ready to head the movement. There is no insuperable boundary. Moreover, social status, which is related to the potency of the dominant

behavior, may also be acquired by accident. Consequently, it is right to speak of the instinct of hierarchic behavior in which the reflex of power (domination) blends with the reflex of subordination. Which of the reflexes takes effect depends on the circumstances. The experiments of I.P. Pavlov, the distinguished natural scientist, are unequivocal proof thereof.

Here it is important to note that among leaders the power reflex becomes predominant. Power is their principal and self-sufficient want. For them it is a value in itself. The leader covets and campaigns for power with the same greed, writes Moscovici, as the believer covets life in the hereafter [1, p. 30]. The leader, therefore, is someone who must on all accounts be the head of a group, often regardless of what it stands for.

The genetic program of humans as members of a biological species says: "You must be member of a group. That is best for you." In psychology this is known as the need for affiliation, that is, for belonging to a group, for intercourse and approval.

Many people probably noticed how an ant "sniffs" every mate travelling past by touching it with its feelers. It does so again and again, making sure that the other fellow is from its own ant-hill.

People have the same behavioral program. Meeting a stranger (or an old friend after a long separation), the subject identifies his/her group affiliation. As a rule, he does so unconsciously. The identification occurs along lines important to the subject, depending on which group is relevant (democrat or patriot, Spartak soccer fan, beer lover, and the like). Naturally, the ethnic (racial) identification occurs most easily and most unobtrusively; for this reason, nationalist behavior is often turned on without a second thought. "It's written on their faces that they belong to the same group" is all the reason required.

The social groups are countless—from sports fans and people of the same occupation to those whom we earlier described as system-forming. It is these latter (clan, social estate, class, state, religion, and ethnic community) that inspire the maximum sense of belonging. To be their member is the most significant form of group behavior.

LEADER AND CROWD—A TRAGIC CONFLICT OF MOTIVATIONS

Potential leaders try on the garb of leaders of different ranks. Mostly they are aware that they are not cut out for the crown and scepter, for being No. 1 in a group such as the state. So they set the plank lower and lower until they reach a level at which they think they can succeed.

Since the choice of groups that may be headed is limited, and since vacancies are few for leaders on a worldwide or national scale, most potential leaders set their sights on a regional or ethnic group (the two often coincide). B. Yeltsin, for example, was aware that his

potential did not suffice for him to be head of the Soviet Union. He had no other choice but that of exploiting the rife separatist sentiment to dismember the country and become leader No. 1 of one of its parts.

An ethnic leader is aware he has no chance of becoming leader of a higher rank. Stalin, for example, could not have had strong nationalist feelings, not because he was a born internationalist, but because he was a leader who had outgrown the bounds of a minor ethnic group and aspired to worldwide influence. The localist cares of nationalist leaders were foreign to him.

It is not because he passionately loves "his people" that an ethnic leader is dedicated to the nationalist idea. On the contrary, he espouses the idea because it holds the promise of his becoming a real leader. It is safe to assume that Gamsakhurdia loved the Georgians more than Stalin-Dzhugashvili did, while the latter unquestionably loved the "Soviet people" more than the former. Certainly, the leader is not aware of the ethological determinant of his/her behavior and is often sincere in his/her feelings. But that does not alter the substance of the matter.

For the politician, the people is no more than a means to an end and the justification of crime. One of the "political" characters of B. Kerbabaev, a classic of Turkoman literature, said, "The people is a herd of sheep: it'll go wherever it is driven."

The ethological basis of collective behavior, therefore, is the leader who needs to head a group (in the final count, it is immaterial what group, for it amounts to a pure domination reflex), on the one hand, and the subjects, whose craving is to become members of a group (pure group instinct that seeks an outlet), on the other. This relation, however, is marked by a tragic contradiction. People strive to unite in a group because their blind instinct says it is better for them to do so. However, the leader is less moved by the group's well-being, because his psyche is encumbered by the power reflex.

In some circumstances, the power reflex morbidly active in a small group of people trying to realize themselves by means of the ethnic idea is liable to exercise so strong an influence on the crowd that it arouses pathosociological frenzy. Conditionally, this may be described as a nationalist psychosis. That is why ethnic movements are all too often unconstructive, irrational, and unjustifiably aggressive.

In the early 1980s, I associated extensively with young scholars from different republics of the Soviet Union. The national question was then on everybody's lips. I recall a dialogue with an impetuous young man from one of the Union republics. He said,

"We've got to break away from the Soviet Union."

I asked him what for.

"We want independence," he replied.

"For what reason?"

"Our national pride is being hurt," he said.

"In what way?"

"By the absence of independence."

"Supposing you separate and people will live worse?"

"What of it. Independence is more important."

"But supposing there are those who will not want to separate and live worse?"

"They don't deserve to live at all and must be destroyed," was his startlingly vicious reply.

Ten years later, the young man became a leader of the republic's national movement.

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