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“The Role of Civil Society in the Fight Against Corruption”

There is no state in the world where we can not find the signs of corruption (by various scales and forms). It has no economic, political, cultural, ideological or geographical boundaries. This unique phenomenon is observable in every type of society and is constant malady for a state development process.

Corruption started in ancient times, in parallel with the birth of first civilization and division of society into different strata. In the newly established social relations state officials gained functions of administration and were given opportunities of utilizing social resources (corruption from above). Activity of an individual was limited and regulated by moral and legal norms. Subsequently, there always were and so will be in future the people, who try to get desired results by pervert, simple means. Corruption is the best option for that (corruption from below).

Corruption is widely spread in the developing countries, its results are of destroying effect for a state security, it undermines mutual confidence in the society, causes moral degradation of population, provokes emigration and illegal transfer of capital from the country. Corruption endangers poor strata of society. The state having this malady is particularly unmerciful towards normal, virtuous part of society.

The best solution to the problem of corruption is the political will of government and existence of a strong, influential public opinion. Existence of civil society is a fundamental problem. It started in parallel with formation of a state and division of society. Since then the issue of interdependence of government and society has been in the center of universal attention and frequently caused a large number of social conflicts. Today this problem is among global challenges, which will determine the perspectives of developing world community. The above mentioned requires fundamental analysis.

Formation of a civil society starts together with establishment of elements of market economy and competition. If we consider an individual to be the basis of civil society, then its facilitators are institutions, groups and unions, which on their part aim at positive realization of human capacity, its requirements and goals. It is established that civil society is a system for ensuring livelihood, regeneration and transfer from one to another generation of socioeconomic and spiritual spheres. It unifies social institutions and the relations independent from a state thus enhancing harmonization of individual, group and state requirements.

The theme of civil society is not sufficiently reviewed in modern Georgian social literature. During decades this problem was practically closed for social science. In the end of 80th and the beginning of 90th of the last century many politicians of democratic orientation considered that demise of totalitarian state is sufficient for automatic establishment of open society, which will bring the state based on law, market economy and civil self-consciousness. But as it turned out existence within Russia for 200 years left side effects to us.

We denied political institutions of totalitarian era but were became hostages of its political culture. Therefore, demise of previous regime brought in Georgia not civil society and the state based on law but “shadow” society, in which a “privatized” state upholds the interests of financial oligarchs, thus infringing the interests of the majority of population.

Unprecedented crisis caused mass atomization and lumpinization of the population. This means not only pauperization of the majority of the society, but also loss of opportunities for self-organization, protection of their own interests. Unprepared reforms, their social character caused not social protest, but social separation and decay of the society. The only objective for everyone is self-preservation. The scale of deformation of the mode of life and mentality in the very beginning of the reform could not be and was not corrected promptly.

For some reason in our country democracy is equaled to freedom. In our opinion, “Freedom” should be considered as the result of democracy. For its achievement person and society must pass the following essential stages:

1. Professionalism. Is achieved by relevant education strengthened by fair competition.
2. Responsibility. Individual as well as society must have high sense of responsibility.
3. Dignity. An individual and society should have dignity and manage to protect their own rights. The most depressing is a nation deprived of its dignity.

Freedom as a result can be achieved only after experiencing these stages fully. Our society has not yet passed these stages. Therefore the society in the form it is being formed today in Georgia can not provide for democratic development and social and psychological support of the reforms by the population. Existing realities that are mainly predetermined by the inadequacy of transformation discredited the idea of democracy in the public consciousness. Subsequently, the population was possessed by apathy and disregard towards civil activities, the confidence between population and Government was vanished. Society can not influence government and became only background for “the activities of the government”. It is quite easy to manipulate such a society.

Education is one of the main factors determining civil development of a state. In the developed countries provision of education increases gross national product up to 40%. Exactly after prioritizing education, the countries of Eastern Asia – Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia reached the welfare of developed countries in a term of 10-15 years. In our country many people consider that education should be paid attention only after achieving economic welfare. According to Kh. Ohasa, Professor of Tokyo University: “The end of the cold war liberated mankind from unfruitful competition. Today all wise leaders are aware that level of education and science is a determining factor for the competitiveness of the country and its economic development.”

What do we face today in the educational system of Georgia?

Like all other spheres, educational system is also in crisis. Corruption is ordinary practice, especially in (State) higher school. At a glance, Georgia is on the level of the world’s developed countries. Educational index equals to 0,90 and complies with the level of European countries having “high human development.” Naturally there raises a question, if we have such a high level of education, why do not we have relevant economic welfare? So we have to admit that this is only quantity and form and not quality and contents. We witness only declarations on the priority of education. It is completely torn apart from reality. Despite prioritizing educational system, the processes undergoing during years tell quite contrary. In the common expenditure of extremely low budget the dues for educational system are reduced year by year. If in 1997 they equaled to 6,0%, in 1998 – 3,8%, in 1999 scheduled 3,8%, in 2000 - 2,9%. Today the salary of lecturer having scientific degree in higher educational institution equals to 30-40 Lari, ten times less than it was in 1990. It is paradoxical, but in

higher school the salary of a doctor of sciences, or of a professor is smaller than that of a watchman or an office-cleaner.

In Soviet Union the study of social sciences was subject to ideological pressure. Social sciences play decisive role in the formation of individual consciousness. Marxist philosophy, political economy, scientific communism, Marxism-Leninism provoked formation of a deformed, mythological consciousness. Such consciousness deprives a person of the capacity to think and analyze, to have initiative and be independent.¹ Exactly this factor is one of the basic reasons of today's low civil culture that creates solid obstacles in the course of establishing market relations.

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union had sound achievements, in particular, in various fields of science, in transitional period the above mentioned achievements practically are not applied.

In the opinion of American Professor S. Coen, the greatest specialist of the problems of CIS: "There is an unprecedented process of demodernization undergoing in post soviet area. When teachers, doctors and other employees of a budget sphere do not receive even miserable salaries for their work this can be compared only to a slave-owning system. When the majority of population having higher education has to earn its living by non prestigious activity, this also is not the 20th century. Therefore, in post-soviet countries I see transition not from the worse to the better but I see a large number of missed opportunities. All the success, notwithstanding the type of government in the presence of which it was achieved – was the achievement of a state and a people. There was no reason to deny it."

Last decade showed us that in the beginning of the reforms our population was not ready for the realities of market economy. The latter has complex and contradictory character, it is directly connected to economic freedom. But freedom, as inestimable social value can be employed positively as well as negatively. Many people considered that transition to the market economy would ensure their welfare by itself. Many do not realize up to this day that a real market needs protection and support, and this is a duty of every citizen together with the state.

Today's social science is separated from Georgian reality and needs essential transformation. Practical problems should inspire new researches as well as interdisciplinary approach to modern problems is highly required. Synthesis of economy, philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, political theory, law, ethics and other social sciences should be employed more actively.

Development of social sciences must be based on the spiritual heritage of Georgian nation that is manifested in its beliefs, moral values and peculiarities of its legal consciousness.

Formation of a civil society must be based on middle class, which should comprise the majority of population. It should become bases for establishing democratic values. Regrettably, in Georgia we don't observe the process of formation of efficient middle strata of society. The main reason of the above-mentioned is the fact that the incomes of the majority of population are "shady." Many people try to prove that there is no middle strata in Georgia. I do not share this opinion and assert that this strata does exist in our country, which

¹ It should be noted that there was no real interest in the population of Georgia of the above ideology and disciplines that was additional component for developing formalism and corruption.

is proven by real life (total turnover of goods in various fields of trade, established prices; overcrowded traffic, etc). It is important to know from which sources this strata receives income. Analysis of social structure of population gives us the reason to state the following:

- The rich comprise 4-5% of population. This is the highest rank political elite, business elite and solid proprietors;
- Middle strata comprises 30-35% of population. Presumably, today's middle class can be divided into two groups:

First Group, so called "shady middle class," is the part of population (20-25%), which is able to get shady income in the conditions of systematic corruption;

Second Group, new middle class, which regrettably is smaller than "shady middle class" (10%). This group is employed by private sector. Their income depends on their own labor and professionalism. It is very small in numbers and can not play serious role in the economic and political life of the country.

- The poor, regrettably, comprise 60% of population. Scientific intelligentsia, qualified workers and socially least protected strata – pensioners, internally displaced persons, invalids, etc.

In a democratic state middle class should be vast majority of population (70-80%), which will have transparent official income. In general this strata should comprise entrepreneurs involved in official business and intelligentsia.

What do we face in this connection in our country? First of all, middle strata is small in numbers and secondly, the income of the most of them is shady. We should presume that this part of population will not support the establishment of real democratic institutions. Therefore, today in Georgia there is no culture worthy for civil society, also collective consciousness is very low.

Human capital may develop in to directions: positive and negative. It depends on the way – legal or "shady" – of the development of our economy and on the entrepreneur activity. State should establish the norms of conduct of entrepreneurs, required by democratic society. A civilized entrepreneur, on its part, must be certain in the productivity of its labor not only for himself, but also for society and the state. There was time when Henry Ford had nothing but the best organizational ideas. His endeavors were manifested in a highly notable phrase: "What is good for Ford – is good for America."

A civilized entrepreneur should respect and accept the laws of the country, comply with the rules of fair competition and social order. The middle strata should increase exactly by entrepreneurs employed in legal business (which will be added by scientific intelligentsia having higher salaries), which will have transparent incomes. This strata should become the part of the society having creative and civil consciousness. Scale, character and psychology of entrepreneurs' activity is important attribute of democratic nature of society.

Unlike family and relative links, in which relations are statutory, in a civil society citizens are unified by common interests that they have to uphold in the conditions of competition. Exactly the competition makes population to look for necessary links. If there is upset social environment, population establishes vertical links², which increases shady relations and enhances the institutionalization of corruption. If social environment is healthy, transparent democratic institutions are developed, there is confidence in population, they establish horizontal links, their quantity and possibilities to influence are better. Establishment of such

² The quantity of these links is highly limited and goes on illegally.

links is enhanced by informational provision of the population and awareness of human rights.

Civil forms of society must create organizational basis for the participation of citizens in the state building and arrangement. The feeling of responsibility towards personal rights and in general, towards country should be strengthened.

Rational, responsible person, person acting with understanding and with professionalism – this is a normative model of modern democracy. But the basis of a democratic state is making important decisions by majority and not by one man, or by privileged minority – the elite. Firm majority of population must participate in governing the state. Each person must have the feeling of responsibility before society.

Pursuant to new approach to the problem of determination, neither existence determines consciousness (materialism), nor consciousness – existence (idealism), but a human being, having professionalism, responsibility and dignity, creates history during his/her activities (labor, etc.) within existence. Individual progressively understands, feels, makes transition and develops reality (nature, society, its own personality). Consequently, human being in reality leads the way of life, which must be in compliance with the interests of a state. The above mentioned requires relevant components of human capital that is achieved by democratic education.

Thereafter, really elective, non-government, democratic institutions must be established which will become active participants of regulation of economic and social processes. Such civil institutions must make social relations maximally transparent. Establish control over legislative, executive and judicial branches of a state by means of a fair confrontation, lobbying and cooperation. Civil society must become active participant of a dialogue with the government and take part in representative democracy (formation of government by regular elections), as well as in the implementation of this democracy through constant dialogue with the government.