



UDK 321.7+316.344.42
 Manuscript received: 15.08.2010.
 Accepted for publishing: 12.10.2010.
 Review article

Serbian Political Thought
 No. 1-2/2010, Year II, Vol. 2
 pp. 99-112

Miloš Knežević

Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade

Democratism and Elitism: Fragments on Elites, Democracy and Elitism

Abstract

The art of government almost always contains premises of competition and imposing and manipulation, and thus of politics as well. Negative and worth(less) type of elites and elitisation most often takes place in the area of direct politics. An aristocracy is a government of the minority of the best, whereas a democracy is a government of a majority, without substantial determination of its quality. In cases imbued with national elite and official, formal or state elite there are numerous congruencies in the common aspiration to establish a nation state in its democratic and European form. However paradoxical it may seem, neoliberal pro-democratism relies on the conceptual legacy of the left, first and foremost on its anarchist doctrine of the abolition of the state and the communist learning on dying of the state. Therefore, in the neoliberal grudge towards a strong state, some well-known components of anarcho-syndicalism, bolshevism, Leninism and Trotskyism can be distinguished. It is obvious that under counter indicated circumstances of pervading regressive and amoral political statuses of ochlocracy, kleptocracy, timocracy and mafocracy, Serbian society in decline has great difficulty with its own elites. In correspondence between political theory and political practice of a society in transition, especially Serbian society in "passing" and "change", there is an apparent gap between proclaimed ideals and non-idealized reality. Power is mostly won and obtained by those who do not gain it by means of their virtues, but by resourcefulness and skill. Democrats govern as pro-democrats, in the name and on behalf of ideals of democracy. Manipulated and "democratized" transitional mass, in the sad role of the loser of the transition, has replaced the oppressed working class that had disappeared from the political and economic scene in the vortex of deindustrialization and deagrarianisation of Serbia. The working class and middle class have actually merged into governable and impoverished transitional mass. During the process of massification subjects of transition have been turned into passive and depersonalized objects of the reforming "transition". Many of those who wanted to pass into welfare have, in reality, been skillfully tricked!

Key words: elites, elitisation, sociology of elites, mass, massification, massocracy, democratism, pan-democracy, demagogue, neoliberalism.

From fragmentary insights to sociology of elites

Although the appearance of social elites reaches all areas of life, and as such is an object of everyday interest, media reporting and prominence, elites have mostly been the object of ordered and disciplinary study of sociology, politicology, law, economics, culturology, history, psychology and anthropology. An abundance of scientific areas that have studied phenomenology of elites more closely still does not signify the creation of a discipline dedicated to them alone. Such a discipline, let us call it elitology-to the author's knowledge-does not exist,¹ although a particular subdiscipline of sociology, the sociology of elites², is the closest in responding to its undoubtful scientific and social need. In Serbia, research on elites from the sociological viewpoint depends primarily on the total sociological scope of research, particularly on the degree of its subdivision to specific disciplines. A remark should be added to the above said. The appearance of elites, the process of elitisation and characteristics of elitism are undoubtedly phenomena of social statics and dynamics, and do not depend completely on scientific and critical interpretation in its establishing and manifestation. Regardless of how and how much elites and related phenomena are affirmed or negated in the social sphere, in their problematic phenomenology they will interchangeably persist on both authentic and pseudo-morphogenetic forms.

In brief, humanities, regardless of the degree of their aspiration and articulation, are not capable enough to monopolistically influence the appearance and life of elites, but surely express unquestionable ability to explain them, thus qualifying and disqualifying them in the fight for recognition, i.e. legitimization of the existing order.

It is important to distinguish the appearance of an elite science and scientific elites from the abovementioned, as well as the efforts for establishing stronger scientific criteria in recognizing, assessment and evaluation of elites.³ This type of elitism can be seen under social circumstances of reign of ideas and rule of ideologists- ideocracy and ideocrats. A special kind of extraordinary position of professional scientific classes is represented in the rule of science or scientocracy. If the rule of social processes relies mainly on technology - then we are talking about technocracy.

1 Sociologist Ljubiša Mitrović believes that a new science, *elitology* is appearing: "Within the context of making new syntheses in contemporary science there is a tendency to construct and develop *elitology* as a transdisciplinary science, that would, by encompassing and integrating knowledge of a number of social sciences and humanities (philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, elite pedagogy, politicology and management) study sources and ways of creating social elites, their relations with social classes and their role in social changes" (Mitrović Ljubiša, 2010: 251)

2 The author of the lines has not, in his research, ever come across examples of scientists from here who consistently and in detail represent any kind of a *theory of elites*. There are, however, numerous fragments in translations, reviews and summaries, theorems, sociologemas, philosophemas of individuals relating to the issue of elites, but there are no comprehensive and deeper studies. There have been, though, skillfull reviewers and apt translators of famous world authors, primarily from the domain of the abovementioned sociology of elites, but original works easy to remember of Serbian authors have not been noted.

3 More on the subject, for example: Trgovčević, 1986; Trgovčević, 2003.

The listed kinds and forms of rules, i.e. special “cracies” give preference to the power of knowledge in a conspicuous manner, and the expert art of its use. Theoretically “washed-out” and consumptive, vain knowledge and non-communicative metaphysical and poetical constructions and systems without any “contact” with real life and media practice lose the race, left worn-out on the social margins. Here in action is a strategy of narrative simplification- apparent visibility of the sent “message”, at the first glance. The second, perhaps deeper look does not seem to be necessary, for there is no depth, it cannot be found in stirred shallow waters, just as in rush desubjectivation there is no time for in-depth perceptions.

In chaotic times, there is a growing demand for accurate future forecasts. In a state of turmoil the confused look for reliable signs.

In a bestirred crowd kinetic drives of both a wild herd and a tame flock are manifested. Equipped with manipulative rods technotronic shepherds do not count with civic awareness, a status of a free citizen or political culture. Their goals- relying on psychoanalysis and behaviorism- are about primal instincts, impulses, sentiments. Who will become a shepherd, and who will remain undifferentiated member of a galloping herd is the matter of nature of a particular social structure and its dynamics.

Also noticeable are growing tendencies for anticipating and predetermining and also scientifically planning and forming contemporary elites in various fields. The functional approach to elites is contributed to with the more traditionally formulated science of staffing, then management theory and relatively new leadership theory, as well as the science of human resources.⁴

Most of the listed disciplines contain a wish to minimise social risk by means of training privileged individuals loyal to the system of existing relations. Plannable matrix for forming a “future elite” originates from the political part of the Protestant predestination theory.

Evolutionists of capital and capitalism and revolutionists of its surpassing and abrogating go hand in hand in an unusual way. Namely, both are certain of the missionary predestination of their own avantgardism - capitalistic power elites and the party leadership of a working class. Although the Second World of communism suffered a devastating blow and surrendered in the last decade of the previous century, tendential and teleological differences of views have not disappeared yet. Although capitalism has become the prevailing form of social life, for the Second World has also accepted its experience and rules, the left, however fragmented, still has not retreated from the global scene where, the Cold War

4 See: Petrović Piroćanac, 2009. Also: Subotić, 2003.

euphoria of system convergence⁵ was followed by multilateral and multipolar sobering of the actually divergent planetary flows.

Political shading of elites

In the beginning, of course, there was not Politics but a Word, unless the first Word itself was not a fruit of inconceivable politics! Does the origin of macrocosm duplicate in the human microcosm? Regardless, in hyperpolitised communities an impression is imposed that the primary constitution of not only a community, but of an individual existence is politicised, and therefore political. Pre-political and post-political and nothing else. “Pre-” meaning original effect, and “post-” not meaning departure from politics or its exceeding by means of something better, essentially nonpolitical, but an inevitable, politically caused effect. Whether we like it or not, we live overwhelmed by the world of hyperpolitics.

The imposing and overwhelming political inevitability causes extra-political inarticulateness and inability to envisage and understand the being of the world and self-being outside of the aforementioned politics. Being “outside politics”, acting outside the command of the strongest word, not being a “political animal” becomes an ever harder fulfilling transpolitical wish of a “postmodernly” unsettled citizen. Can one be a member of elites without participating in politics, or energetic and unavoidable participation of politics, that, finally, creates the appealing power of elitism?

Regardless of how much it gravitates towards the technical and technological, as well as the concerned and procedural, and seemingly neutral, the art of government almost always contains certain smack of competition, intrusion and manipulation, and thus politics. Politics, regardless how discouraging and sporadically loathsome, is an unavoidable intonation of elitisation. Even when a type of social elite- e.g. scientific, technical, literary, artistic, spiritual- seemingly very remote from contaminated and devastated political flows establishes itself against them and by no means wants to be singed and besmirched as a minor “part of a political story”, even then politics, openly or clandestinely, influences, determines and causes the elite status.

Isn't then the appeal for deidealising and depoliticising of eminent, distinguished and devoted fields in striving towards an esteemed professional social status, under the circumstances of mutated panpolitics and political proliferation of the worst kind, just a wail of a desperate man in ever spreading political deserts?

5 As a comparison, it would not be bad to consult the works of popular authors from the Cold War era and their contributions to the *convergence of systems theory*, such as: Moris Duverger (Duverger Moris, *Introduction à la politique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1964), Talcott Parsons (Parsons Talcott, *Structure and Process in Modern Society*, Free Press, New York, 1967), Raymond Aron (Aron Raymond, *La lutte des classes*, Galimard, Paris, 1964), Daniela Bell (Bell Daniel, *The End of Ideology*, The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1960) and Kenneth Galbraith (Galbraith John Kenneth, *The Affluent Society*, Boston, 1958).

If politics brings its own standards into worlds struggling and wishing to survive unbesmirched with undignified political ephemerides, where is the nearest exit and salvation? Is it in "anti-politics" (György Konrád), in counter-political elitisation, or in particular apolitical alternatives that present an escapist illusion that under circumstances of relentlessly pressing politics, an individual, that can do almost nothing or nothing at all, can in the end survive without politics that is willing and able to do anything?

Arrhythmic elitisation

Occurrence and evolution of social elites are not always continuous and implicit, nor expected and „natural“, i.e. „organic“ processes. There are communities of equals, undifferentiated uniform collectives without any distinguishing and standing out, as well as backward and dependent societies without conspicuous elites. Elitism, however, does not necessarily have to be a trait of developed societies. Undeveloped societies can also have classes that surpass others and distinguish themselves in their privileged elite position, just like discrete and imperceptible power elites can operate in developed societies.

Elitisation and de-elitisation can occur intermittently, or can happen at once, suddenly, forcedly and "artificially". Negative and worth(less) type of elites and elitisation most often occurs in the area of direct politics. Rise of individuals from "the ashes of a revolution" or "burn-out ruins of transition", to the pointy apexes of power, and their falls to impotent feet, are all results of politising takeovers and rejections. Political delegitimising most often implies de-elitisation of the individual, and group, creation or institution that has suffered a failure, defeat and loss in political processes.

In mutual competitions, conflicts and fights on elite replaces the other, and in time, in clouds of disbelief and complaint, suffers the same fate. Elites fight for ever growing, if not crucial influence, indicating superiority and supremacy. Horizontal and vertical stratification of elites are, as one may say, natural, but their instinctive particularism is not. If, during the fight of antagonized elites, general social, national and political (state) values are questioned, then their mutual elimination and destruction are in progress.⁶

The emergence of projected elites is most dramatic and occurs most often in the sphere of direct politics. Political elites outshine and cast a long shadow of power on other elites in a society. It could be said that particular groups of political exceptions, in fact, party elites under circumstances of political pluralism absorb attention of the media to the extent that does not leave enough space for other social elites to

6 Neven Cvetićanin believes that every new Serbian constitution has been followed by a confrontation with an old partial „elite“: „due to which the society could not enjoy any stabilisational cumulative effects, discontinuity would continue, and partial elites were at the same distance from the stable legitimacy, that stayed unavoidably „fluctuating““ (Cvetićanin 2010: 122).

distinguish themselves and for the public to become acquainted with them. In authoritarian eras of political monism unsurmountable ideological and political barriers are set before undesirable elitism. Selection and cooperation, that is inclusion of an individual among the formal, i.e. official elite is done according to standards of appropriateness and loyalty to the established system of powers.

In backward and undeveloped societies, where politics has been a bad or the worst mode of social action for a longer period of time, a political elite is forced to various means of compensation and „advancement“ of its, by all means inferior, historical role. Under crisis conditions of social passivity and immobility being far away from politics and ideology, from the moral point of view (moral as a part of politics, not its moving outside of politics!) means being at a tolerably safe distance from the fatal source of mental and moral contamination. Of course, these are only aspirations and efforts under conditions that make them hard to accomplish. From that point of view, politics, no matter how inevitable and fateful, is seen as arbitrariness, and is given a bad name. There are two essentially different existential ways of participating in politics: acting politically and be an object of political action.

As an exceptional social group a true elite differs and is valued according to certain standards, just like it is created, positioned and collapses through processes of elitisation and de-elitisation, subelitisation and counterelitisation. Nevertheless, it is necessary to discern and determine:

- 1) if the elite itself, existing and functioning in a certain way, exhibits bad characteristics effecting its image and power, but not challenge it as an elite;
- 2) or with groups of people characterised and burdened with bad traits, the very counterelite traits - flaws and vices - thwart their individual pretensions for gaining elite status?

Most of the expressed doubts also relate to the post-Yugoslav Serbia. Keeping in mind spatial and temporal outline of the particular ten year long period (2000-2010), and Serbia persevering somehow, the phenomenon of elites, after the first emotional and intuitive recognition, is shown as deeply troublesome and dilemmatic. Therefore the essence of the concept, regarding the occurrence and absence of elites is related and relatives with akin, yet different phenomena and concepts, like: quasi-elites, pseudo-elites, counter-elites, subelites, parallel elites, non-elites, class, order, mass, crowd, scum, etc.

Democratism and elitism

Aristocracy is the rule of a minority of not any kind, but of the best, whereas democracy is the rule of a majority, with no significant determination of its quality. There are opinions that elites are in fact, in the lit anteroom of aristocracy, but clearly opposite of democracy! That the members of elite and democrats are actually in opposition; that true democrats and elitists cannot be in the same political boat. For

democracy is, in various ways indeed, the rule of the people, whereas elites are built on the criterion of special and rare traits, distinction, exception and esteemed virtues, not mere majority of numbers. Meritocracy, based on recognized and esteemed virtues, is the natural setting of elites. Democracy is established and institutionalized will of a majority, regardless of its social and other qualities.

Can members of elites strive for democracy if it stands for moderation and moderate measure, averaging and uniforming the rule of people, i.e. their representatives elected by the will of a majority? In that case hardly, but not in a situation when “real” and “authentic” democrats plead politically for the social exclusivity of a pro-democratic position. Then the privileged pro-democrats become pro-elitists, i.e. the elite, regardless of initial intentions of their own principles. It is exactly in post-socialist transition that post-authoritarian missionaries of democracy- elite democrats or democratic elite-emerge.

To pro-democrats - “the secular clergy” (Milo Lompar) and “missionary intelligence” (Slobodan Antonić) in transitions the attribute of democracy gives certain advantages within the framework of reforming appropriateness for participating in a game of power redistribution and securing a new social status. Insistence on universal and superior value of democratic ideals in practice creates a situation where other political values and ideals suffer and are moved in the background. In political life, namely, a pro-democratic race begins, a perhaps unique demo-stampede followed with boasting with unquestionable democratic orientation, that under circumstances characteristic of a relict authoritarian culture, but also of the new pro-democratic exclusivity (the famous “noalternativeness” in various spheres not only the sphere of foreign relations?), lose the social substance.

Democracy is then watered down in an empty proceduralism, debating prattle and numeric constitution of the majority’s, and therefore superior will, thus becoming an excuse for all kinds of non-democratic and anti-democratic malversations. The above described, of course, happens also in the scientific domain, i.e. justifying social theory, especially in the abovementioned democratic theory. In Serbia, to be fair, with certain historical and scientific peculiarities or screwinesses, to be more precise. Zoran Avramović, a sociologist, is also aware of it, and he noted that “the theoretical role of the pro-democratic intelligence was to prove the claim that national and state interests are of secondary importance in comparison with democratic (substantial) demands”.⁷

Indeed, Avramović stirred up a hornet’s nest of unresolved contradictions of the part of the pro-democratic elite in Serbia. It is easy to see that certain pro-democrats have opposed their vision of democracy, both conceptually and practically, to the nation and country, as there is no possibility, both fundamentally and formally,

7 At the same place Avramović continues: “Cognitive motivation for a such theoretical direction is less important politically. It is possible that financial interests of a circle of social researchers were helped by some domestic and foreign funds. A character psychological structure of a social theorist’s personality is also not excluded. Theoretically, modesty is also not excluded, for a number of critics of a formal democracy have thrown away their heavy socialistic overcoats.” (Avramović, 2010: 300-301).

of their concurrence and synergic congruence. In ideologically construed tension among the national, state and democratic, various elites that appropriate and stress the appropriate attributes, dispute and exclude one another from the elite status. As if the national and democratic elites cohabit in the same country, Serbia for example, through mutual repudiation and disavowal!

In cases where the national elite permeates the formal, official or state elite, there are, indeed, many congruencies in the mutual aspiration of establishing a national state in a democratic and European form (Knežević, 2008: 127-131). The congruence of national and state elites is sometimes such that the two elites actually equate with each another and run into one flow. On the other hand, the pro-democratic elite in Serbia behaves too often not only as an extreme critic of the nation and nationalism, and the state and etatism, but as their relentless, one could say biblical opponent.

Negative neoliberal utopism

What or of what do liberate those who have contrived they should be neoliberals in Serbia? Economic, political and cultural relations from unbroken restraints of the previous authoritarian system; or Serbia as a whole, or partially from the dominance of inner and outer enemies of liberty; or aberrant citizens of Serbia from outdated national myths of the past; or all those who still believe in values of sovereignty and territorial integrity from the illusions of independence? The core category of the liberal political ideology is freedom. How come, then, that there is so much fiddling with such an important concept in Serbian political life?

If the antinationalism and anti-etatism of the said type of pro-democratic elite in Serbia is based on raw, meaning intellectually unprocessed ideology and non-experienced liberalism, the problem gets worse for fanatical neoliberals appear to nations and countries of states and peoples in transition as unpleasant strategic opponents. Suddenly sprouted neoliberals, namely, progress from original anational and non-stately indifference to riskily sharp forms of negative political utopism-total negation of needs of any nation or states of a nation.⁸ Wish is also a reliable fact, but differs from the fact of unreliability of its fulfillment.

However paradoxical it may seem, neoliberal pro-democratism relies on the conceptual legacy of the left, first and foremost on its anarchist doctrine of the abolition of the state and the communist learning on dying of the state. Therefore, in the neoliberal grudge towards a strong state, some well-known components of anarcho-syndicalism, bolshevism, Leninism and Trotskyism can be distinguished.

8 Keeping in mind neoliberal denial of the nation, working groups, groups for protection of rights of workers and families, a French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu points out: „The movement, made possible by the policy of financial deregulation, towards the neo-liberal utopia of a pure, perfect market takes place through the transforming and, it has to be said, destructive action of all the political measures... aimed at putting into question all the collective structures capable of obstructing the logic of the pure market.“ (Burdije, 1999: 109).

Anarchistic abolition, Marxist surpassing and neoliberal minimizing of the state make an odd ideological and political amalgam that in the case of Serbia has deadly effects. Political primitivism and anti-pattern have been created and are partially applied, with anational and counterstate attitude cultivated as most compelling evidence. To be clear, it is not only about the criticism of excessive nationalism and statism, but about denial of the nation and state as such.

That kind of upturned soil produces fantastic ideas of absolute multiethnicity and multiple sovereignty that are primarily reflected in the view of Serbia as a loose multiethnic amalgam anyone can access, and Serbs, i.e. Serbians as a mass divided into ethnic-like, non-similar groups. Furthermore, the state of Serbia is not seen anymore as a classic European state creation, but as a neocolonialist aggregate of non-congruent state-like regions. The pro-democratic liberal elite of the extreme kind thinks of Serbs as of a regionalized conglomerate of de-named and renamed ethnic-variations, and of the “uncompleteable state” (in the opinion of the sociologist Vesna Pešić) of Serbia as of a mechanic decentralized aggregate of regions.

Local neoliberal extremists are founded on refutation and “liberating” rejection and denial. Members of the pro-democratic Serbian elite founded this way are not too willing to respect democratic and European orientation of the national and state elite. Moreover, in a typically negativistic manner, automatically give authoritarian, totalitarian and anti-European characteristics to national and state elite, excluding it from the pan-democratic movement that was created on the post-communist wave of transition.

Pitfalls of pan-democracy

After all, is not it obvious that someone's formal self-proclamation as an elite or elitist is not convincing and enough for it truly to be so? To acquire the status of an elite something else and more is required. Social, economic, political and cultural objectivisation is needed,⁹ Gajić also states establishment and veracity, and then recognition and respect. Especially because elitisation is blended and made somewhat difficult by similar, but also pseudo processes and forms. Although their action can be felt in many social areas, authentic elites are not easy to recognize.

Serbia is in the permanent half-time, and it is, at the same time, the unmeasured average half-time. Transitioning from what to what? In the meantime, that is actually a chronopolitical fate of Serbia; in a gap that is actually a geopolitical destiny of the unfinished territorialisation of Serbia. In the chronotope of Serbia, therefore, the situation is approximately such: social elites both exist and do not exist.

9 Politicologist Saša Gajić points out that “Elites have critical dual role in the sphere of cultural influences: as guardians of expressions of the culture they belong to; and as decision-makers and executors of important decisions in facing the external cultural influences.” (Gajić, 2010: 18).

From the point of the functionalist and value-neutral identification, in each of significant social segments numerous prominent groups are active that can be defined as exceptional and privileged, elite. Publicly known experience of belonging to prominent, distinguished, popular and famous groups, or the jet set, is not a deciding criterion, nor an acceptable way of objectivising the elite position.

The view of the situation, standards and beliefs regarding who belongs to elites in Serbia or not all together shows a great confusion and a number of misconceptions.¹⁰ How can a membership in elite be practically recognized and theoretically determined, and what are the standards for determination? Based on the mentioned difference between transit, transition and transformation it is obvious that the creation and activity of elites in the Serbian society are conceptualized beyond the coherent theory of elites, and, in most interpretations, with full dependence on pro-democratic sensibility and the democratic theory.

However, the contradiction between the democratic concept and activity of new elites under aggravated conditions of crisis, social stratification, hierarchy and economic, political and cultural discrimination is not obvious. Pro-democrats use democracy as a transitional ideal to cloud fundamental conflicts they interpret as mere dysfunctions within the social structure. By explaining and speaking in favour of full democratization directed towards democracy they fail to explain the authoritarian premises of elitisation and establishing of the new hierarchy of political power. The negligence comes to happen primarily because they themselves- pro-democrats- are members of the new power elite. That is why the self-explanation of the rocky foundations of the government is missing.

Prominent individuals heuristically successful in interpreting social relations make unique theoretical elite. It has been outlined that in contemporary Serbia theoretical elite has mainly been occupied with the relation between democracy, as the preferable type of social structure, and the state of the nation and the structure of the state, first and foremost through the prism of relations between democratic, national and state interests. However, theoretical elite is not always giving consistent and substantiated answers on social dilemmas or priorities in the time of crisis.¹¹

10 Sociologist Nebojša Popov depicted that confusion with the following words: "Existing suspicions on actual powerful people have been confirmed through the impressive personification of 'the hero of our age'. Along with celebrated politicians, Milošević and then Koštunica, let us mention, for instance, 'mummy Dafina' and 'Jezda, the boss', Karić, Mišković and famous "black pearls", from Arkan and Legija to Šarić and Subotić. There are even various places of power appearing in Schiller and Shakespeare Street... By following daily news, those who want to see, have the opportunity to see appointment of staff to the key positions of power". (Popov, 2010: 3).

11 Zoran Avramović also noticed it: "The artificial dilemma - democracy or nation and state, Serbian theoretical elite answered without a doubt: democracy. But they forgot to think about the final consequences of this point of view: democracy can also be established in a reduced state and a disintegrated nation. " (Avramović, 2010: 304).

Democracy, as an organised rule of the majority of nations in post-communism¹², was the only of all the possible “cracies” to secure the widest scope of applications and implicit, almost absolute legitimacy of representation. Other forms of social structure lost the race with pan-democratism. If all became democrats, if democratisation has taken over everything, if everything became democracy, what happened to the non-democratic rest? Or has the democratic expansionism already led to the famous totalitarian democracy! That is the reason behind the complete or almost complete lack of conceptualisation of the place and the role of elites by means of application of theory of autocracy, aristocracy or monarchy, even premises of conservative liberalism, corporativism, or what is called “classical and traditional or contemporary Right wing”.¹³

Therefore the recognition, interpretation and study of elites and elitism is mainly done relying on democracy, and the process of elitisation is finalised in the mentioned projection of the democratic elite. Moreover, it seems that the “real”, i.e. authentic elite under circumstances of transition can only be the one that of the pro-democratic or neoliberal orientation. If it is not democratic or in liberal in one way or another, can it, or can it not be an elite?

Whether the political elite – as the elite of power and the elite of government – that has climbed to the elite position from the primary pro-democratic aspiration, fully keep its democratic orientation, is another question. Dilemmas on the democratic feature of political elites have especially grown in post-authoritarian and post-socialist countries of an unfinished and immature, blocked and paralysed transition.

The domestic social theory, primarily sociology (of elites) lacks deeper insight into the evolution of elites, their (dis)continuity, standards for formation, social function and perspectives. Authentification of elites is mostly done on the basis of segmentary and arbitrary standards and is categorically confused with somewhat similar, but also very One concept that differs from an elite, its complete opposite but almost necessary as a its contrast, is a mass.

Amorphy of a mass

A mass is formless, plasmatic. Mass is swaying, and tottering, at times calm and placid, sometimes stirred up and moving. A mass does not rule, for it is not able to rule and it cannot rule. However, a mass can demonstrate surprisingly eruptive power, and temporarily rule squares and streets (Ortega i Gaset, 1988: 75-81).

12 An interesting thing is that in the epoch of communism and self-governmental socialism “people’s democracy” functioned, that is, by all means, a tautology of “people’s rule over people”. But did not the same thing happen, on a semantical level, to the Democratic Opposition of Serbia that remained in the opposition to the regime it established even after it had taken the power? Semantical absurdities, however, are irrelevant in real political relations that arbitrarily move, twist and cancel previous meanings of political terms.

13 On that subject: Subotić, 2004. Also: journal *Nova srpska politička misao*, new edition, vol. XI, no. 1-4, issue topic „Desna Srbija“, p. 9-163 (without the year of publishing).

Demonstrations of power of a mass are fierce, can be impressive, exciting or scary. The power of a mass is, nevertheless, unstable, its manifestations do not last for long, nor they have a permanent object. In the uprising against the system the predominance of a mass quickly burns out.

It is ruled on behalf of a mass, and without its name when necessary. An organized minority uses the amorphous energy of a mass. Elites are, surely, well organized, and organization gives formal and essential advantages in the action within an unorganized mass. Unrestraint of a mass is temporary; restraint of an authority over a mass is a permanent fact of a rule. After all, people are happy to obey the "unique impulse of power" (Gaetano Mosca).

Massocracy is not the rule of a mass but a rule over a mass. A mass is just an abstract amorphous totality in the flow; a specially formed totality is a politically organized and active minority. An unorganised and impulsive mass is a medium of power and government to the elite. The political elite is an organized social particle, a restricted minority excluded from the amorphous majority. In that sense, an elite is a differentiated and elevated social group that needs a mass as a background and standard of its privilege and superiority. A mass is a broken mirror of the superiority of an elite.

In massocracy an absolute "experimental" majority of a mass does not have a meaning, for it is wayward. The supposed and undoubted majority of a mass, unlike in the case of an elite, is not counted or institutionally established, thus not constituting actual political power. The power of a mass, even when manifested, is based on amorphous latency. If dispersed energy is channeled and parts of a mass formed as an actual organization, the amorphous characteristic of a mass is abolished, and it is turned into something else, its opposite. That opposite, formed and organized, has no longer a function of a mass or its part, but is manifested as a movement, party, class, citizenry and the like.

Massocracy and democracy

The general reason for the decline of democracy lies in a mass. It seems that the destiny of the human kind under conditions of a demographic boom is averaging. A sea of people, an agitated amorphous mass, and as exceptions, clearly distinguishable individuals. The seed of a mass and massism was already planted in the original idea of a democracy as a rule of a majority. In democracy, however, a majority is counted until the number of voters at the elections is determined, whereas in the reversed flow of civilization a majority is de-formed in a mass of people who are no longer citizens.

Amorphy of a mass and ideological massism characterize modern world. A mass is not demos, meaning that a mass is not people. Seems as if people is misplaced in a mass - massivised people- that the focus of people succumbs to the amorphy of a

mass, traditional traits of people are lost in a mass, and along with it a reliable identity of a nation and citizens' reasonableness. Massism is corrosion on the democratic paneling of the modern politics.

However, not even in democracy all can rule, but only a listed and distinguished majority, or only special representatives on behalf of a generalized majority. For a rule, the ruler needs those who are to be ruled over; rulers need subjects. Not all members of a society can be elite. Is it not too obvious then, that elite needs a counter-phenomenon, *differentia specifica* - a non-elite mass.

The contemporary democracy of the Anglo-Saxon, i.e. European-American kind shows characteristics of a mass and massocracy. To repeat, the ancient *demos* is lost in a hopelessly atomized mass; a potentially constant citizen is exhausted as a sporadic voter. In the countries of the post-communist transition the situation is even worse. Elitisation is fast and has artificial traits. In the place of the epochal change, ruling elites are even further away and are more estranged from a transitional mass.

Instead of a conclusion: Massified democrature

In other words, can bad people, scum from "the bottom of the transitional barrel" that came into power, be presented as an elite? Can elite be built on robbery, plunder and excess plundering of social capital? Can the arriviste greed of new bloodsuckers and pickpockets be considered a trait from which reality arises? Are criminals and the organised crime stronger than the state, and legalised mobsters future owners of Serbia, and perhaps, their present self-appointed clandestine rulers? The answer to the string of rhetorical questions is relatively simple - it should not be possible!

It is obvious that under counter-indicated circumstances of pervading regressive and amoral political statuses of ochlocracy, kleptocracy, timocracy and mafocracy, Serbian society in decline has great difficulty with its own elites. In correspondence between political theory and political practice (empiricism) of a society in transition, especially Serbian society in "passing" and "change", there is an apparent gap between proclaimed ideals and non-idealised reality. Power is mostly won and obtained by those who do not gain it by means of their virtues, but by resourcefulness and skill.

Like the previous contradiction that within the referential framework of the class theory and relying on revolutionary avantgardism did not allow creation of a new class, now under different circumstances of restoration (counter-evolution), the contradiction between the freedom that democracy should have brought and the authoritarian premises of elitisation of its designers, conductors and managers, democratisers and democrators is even more obvious.

Democrators govern as pro-democrats, in the name and on behalf of ideals of democracy. Manipulated and "democratized" transitional mass, in the sad role of the loser of the transition, has replaced the oppressed working class

that had disappeared from the political and economic scene in the vortex of deindustrialization and deagrarianisation of Serbia. The same happened to the middle class during the transit and transition in Serbia.

Previous criteria for generation working class and revolutionary leadership, firstly class awareness and loyalty to the revolution are modified now, to show "dedication to changes", "commitment to transitional reforms" and "aspirations to Euro-Atlantic integrations".

Working class and middle class have actually merged into a manageable and impoverished mass. In the process of massification potential transitional subjects are transformed into passive and depersonalized object of the reforming "transition". Many of those who wanted to pass into welfare have, in reality, been skillfully tricked!

All political participants swear in democracy in one voice, of course, but they also skillfully hide behind the screen of democratic ideas. In the mentioned discrepancy between the reality of transition and its sophisticated idealization, only shrewd critical spirits perceive tragical historical distortions. In the end, the matter is not only the undeveloped constitutional state and the lack of the rule of law, but also the deformity of pro-democratism into directive and decisionist forms of demacrature.

Bibliography

- Avramović, Z. (2010) „Manifestna i latentna uloga dela teorijske elite u Srbiji (1990-2010)“. *Nacionalni interes*, 9(3): 287-306.
- Burdije, P. (1999) *Signalna svetla, Prilozi za otpor neoliberalnoj invaziji*. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Cvetičanin, N. (2010) „Proces konstituisanja političke i društvene elite u srpskom društvu - problem diskontinuiteta i fluktuirajućeg legitimiteta“. *Nacionalni interes*, 9(3): 107-146.
- Gajić, S. (2010) „Pseudomorfoza elita: kulturno-istorijski pregled“. *Nacionalni interes*, 9(3): 11-50.
- Knežević, M. (2008) *Evroskeptizam. Gde je Evropa? 111 evroskeptičkih fragmenata*. Beograd: Zaslou.
- Mitrović, LJ. (2010) „Nova buržoazija i njena elita u društvu perifernog kapitalizma. Skica za sociološki portret“. *Nacionalni interes*, 9(3): 249-270.
- Ortega i Gaset, H. (1988) *Pobuna masa*. Čačak: Gradac.
- Petrović, Z. (2009) *Politički lideršip. Ogledi o postmodernom vođstvu*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije.
- Popov, N. (2010) „Prizivanje neograničene vlasti“. *Republika*, No. 474-475, 3.
- Subotić, D. (2003) *Upravljanje ljudski resursima*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije.
- Subotić, D. (2004) *Srpska desnica u 20. Veku, Knjiga prva*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije.
- Trgovčević, LJ. (1985) *Naučnici Srbije i stvaranje jugoslovenske države 1914-1920*. Beograd: SKZ - Narodna knjiga.
- Trgovčević, LJ. (2003) *Planirana elita. O studentima iz Srbije na evropskim univerzitetima u 19. veku*. Beograd: Istorijski institut, Službeni glasnik.