

HOW TO MAKE A REVOLUTION HAPPEN?!

(American University of Armenia, April 13, 2007)

Whereas the previous papers have focused mainly on the problems in respect of the development of Armenia and Armenians, this material is the first attempt to give some answers or at least direct my thoughts, in order to see where these answers could be found.

First of all we have to come to know what a revolution is. The word has derived from a Late Latin *revolutio*, meaning revolt, overturn, a deep change in development of any events in the nature, society or cognition. A revolution suggests a stick-slip move from a qualitative state to another one as demonstration of one of the most important regularities of development of the nature, society and thinking.

Every time when we use the idea of revolution in relation to public processes we have to understand where a qualitative change of a society in review, or an object in a broader sense, is happening? Examples of revolutions of the Ukrainian ‘oranges’, the Georgian ‘roses’, and the Kyrgyz ‘tulips’ show us that at times a revolution is not necessarily to mean a qualitative change of the state of society but a shift in power under a forced pressure of society. And that same society at times cherishes not a new ideology, new politics, new economics or, more accurately, the ontology of development, but an issue of the personality and the team having found themselves at the realm of power.

So, in pursue of qualitative changes, the masses sometimes advocate a revolution in the form of shift of power, failing to realize that they only could find their needs/requirements in quite a different level of action and that they could not be satisfied due to the revolutionary shift of power. Indeed, soon after a ‘revolution’, the society is beginning to realize that the overcoming of what has been achieved and what is wishful is not happening, while the situation worsens by political battles between those who came to power and those who lost the power. So, the revolutionary shift of power without qualitative changes for really satisfying peoples’ needs is hard to name a revolution, since no

breakthrough is happening and the new power ends with new people with old ontology.

When we talk about the need of implementing revolution, the accent should be placed on where a breakthrough is [on a basis of new ontology], what qualitative parameters of self-organization, functioning of society will change as a result of revolution, and not to question how certain forces came or should come to power and what qualities they should be prescribed to.

Then, we need to understand the core of a revolutionary process, dwelling comprehensively on all its phases.

The first phase of the revolutionary process is utmost latent and suggests emergence of a revolutionary idea (new ontology). Such an idea can arise in the mind of one person or a group of persons. The idea further goes through probation, knowledge is being accumulated and certain understanding of authenticity of the idea is being shaped.

Let us digress for a while and note that the essence of a human being lies in his faith – the faith in God, in oneself, in a nation, in an idea, in the future. A human being without faith will turn into a dangerous element, destroying the society, killing synergism and negating the laws of co-existence. It is impossible to build a harmonious society without faith, because it will be impossible to be in harmony with oneself.

In the second phase, the idea is starting to expand in broader masses of society, and the process of new establishments (mostly informal) is launching. These establishments create an institutional memory of ideas of change and development. When it comes to emergence of new establishments we take into account the beginning of new relations, new subjects, new competences and knowledge that get forms under new ontology.

Such establishments sooner or later are inevitably confronting the establishments functional under old ontology, and this gives a rise to the conflict leading to a real breakthrough, which is the third phase. It is only this breakthrough that determines strong-willed actions of the team which either owns or grabs the levers of power aimed at change and development which, you name it, is revolution.

Now let me draw a scheme to demonstrate all what was said above (see annex).

A revolution can only be executed when the society is prepared to perceive a new ontology, and we clearly watch a conflict between the form and content of organization of society.

The conflict can emerge upon occurrence one of the two below scenarios, as follows:

- the first suggests such a substantial change of society that requires a change in the form of organization;
- the second suggests a change in the form of organization that leads to its changed content.

Let me uncover the first scenario by giving an excerpt from then much-talked-of a book *Powershift* authored by Alvin Toffler:

“Three hundred years ago the industrial revolution also brought a new system of wealth creation into being... Smokestacks speared the skies where fields once were cultivated.... Sooner or later, too, wherever steam engines and smokestacks multiplied, vast political changes followed. Monarchies collapsed or shriveled into tourist attractions... In short, the appearance of a new system for creating wealth undermined every pillar of the old power system, ultimately transforming family life, business, politics, the nation-state, and the structure of the global power itself... Those who fought for control of the future made use of violence, wealth and knowledge”.¹

Toffler demonstrates the processes of a qualitative move from a pre-industrial type of organization of society to an industrial one under the post-modernist theory. Evidently, the new system of material values *is* the process which, in essence, provoked a revolution (breakthrough).

This example clearly exhibits the occurrence of the first scenario where substantial change of society leads to change in the form of organization.

¹ Alvin Toffler 'Powershift', pp.10-11, A Bantam Book, 1990

For a more meaningful uncovering of the second scenario, we may look to the newest history of Armenia. I believe, some of you remember those events or heard about them from your parents. We are talking about the revolution in Armenia in 1991 when this nation abandoned the socialistic form of organization of society as a single empire of Soviet Union in favor of the capitalist form of organization as an independent state of Armenia. The first years of independence however have clearly shown, and to a certain extent continue to show, that substantively the society was not prepared to take the new ontology built on the principle of freedom, which among other things proclaims that each of us takes his own responsibility for the decision made, for his being, for his future.

Today we all need to answer a question (especially on the brink of pre-election processes) of why a revolution is not happening in Armenia and why people remain completely indifferent in the pre-election campaigns to the current political events, making no attempt to change?

Further arguing, one may come to a conclusion that actually there is no conflict between a system of management having been shaped for 15 years of independence of Armenia and the needs and necessities of the Armenian society. Groups of society for creation of new ontology of development of Armenia are lacking or have not yet reached a required benchmark. The conformist sentiment is prevailing not least because of objective grounds connected with high level of poverty and low level of education. In politics we observe no ideologies and program approaches, while in the economy trade is exploding as a benchmark process inherent not even in an industrial but pre-industrial society.

What should we do in order to pull ourselves out of the swamp, like Münchhausen? Apparently, there should be a revolution in consciousness.

A revolution in consciousness – that's formation of a new vision of the Armenian society, still non-existent in notion but realizable.

To our opinion, three areas can be distinguished, as follows:

The first area involves demonstrating a supreme sense (area of transcendence).

The second area involves displaying regularities in historic events, landmark global processes and, on this ground, building a rational society as a mainstream.

The third area is mythological in which certain dogmas are dominant and turn into rules of conduct and principles of building of society.

We always have a choice as to which area to take to work in.

In the first area we need to have typology of thinking and development of own paradigm (the ontology of development). There should emerge a leader or a group of people who will be aficionados for making their projects realizable.

The leader will prove his case and make sure his ideas are viable and supported by a supreme sense and will bring people nearer to revolutionary changes. As personal conviction becomes his main resource, the leader will inspire people all around. In the beginning people will have a naked faith in his ideas but will become over time as supporters of these ideas and will incite more and more people to the ideas thus pushing for qualitative changes in society. Singapore went on this path.

In the second area we need to acquire knowledge and develop strategies for using such knowledge on personal example. The paradigm of overtaking development will be realized in this area. That is to say, we shall use the studied experience of developed countries, including their success stories, to replenish our knowledge, to carry out extensive training programs at all levels, and to introduce 'best practices', without however simply copying the forms but trying to realize substantial changes. This is the way Armenia now goes through.

In the third area we have to actualize our own mythology. In this area we get knowledge from our own historic past, the historic memory of the nation; we exhibit our own values, norms, dogmas and lifestyle, and live by these laws. When it comes to development, we understand a much broader input of principles and rules for a society build-up whereas such principles and rules are being drawn from own mythology. Iran has chosen this path.

Which way of these three will the reader choose? Let me propose the following hypothesis as a help to the attentive persons:

Hypothesis: History starts in the future

1. The world history is the fight for vision of the future of nations and peoples. Winners are only the nations who are able to shape that vision and who are able to get to know that. And what is marvelous is that it comes and captures those peoples.

2. The vision should be achievable. If it is not achievable, it is not a vision at all. Achievability suggests capturing of minds of peculiars who should lead the whole nation, peoples and generations.

3. History always tracks the success of winners in view of the future. History is always being rethought and rewritten in vision of the future and not vice versa. History lends out those opportunities which help go ahead and which fits in the vision of the future. Knowing to deal with the past makes it possible to shape the future.

4. The main problem of Armenian people today lies in the absence of a single vision of the future. Public dissociation, rather impartial *per se*, can only be overcome through aspiration to the future and not to the past.

5. Peculiar and leading will be those whom this vision will arrive to; those who will be convinced in that, will have a faith in that, and will give for that the most precious they have. Only then they could inspire others with that vision. Peculiars should see and live the future today. Then supporters will follow, not that fast, but they will. This is the path of revolution. This is the core of revolution.

6. Apparently, current authorities do not have an alternative to the vision of the future. The calls for the powershift are directed to the past and not to the future, and this will in no way bode well. An alternative to the present power may work for those who would follow a clear recipe – faith is a convinced perception of the future.

7. Working in the field of the past means building a concept of overtaking development. In transition societies, the power becomes averse to alternatives just because of the society's inability to unite around the vision of the future, and because of the lack of establishments capable to shape a future. Working in the field of the past and competing with government structures is impossible as there is a clear difference in the resource potential.

8. No single party or non-government organization today is able to propose a more competent and comprehensive program for socio-economic development of the country than the government. And irrespective of who will come to power, the program is non-alternative, as it is in the mainstream.

9. The alternative is a challenge to the world; it is a revolution in thinking. What Armenia really lacks is that breed of champions. There are people rushing into the power to realize a single project of the future, which is being realized. This is why the essence of the fight is not for the future but for the project already underway. The essence of the fight lies in the best fulfillment of the project. Whoever comes to power will do what is already being done – a little bit better, a little bit worse – but the very same project.

So, we have to look back to the history, rethink it and, once the issue of self-identification is resolved, build a new Armenian society. We have to change essentially, and not formally. The rules of conduct should be acceptable, wanted and applicable to the majority. We have to feel comfortable and protected just owing to the ability to cultivate norms for existence independently. Only then we could say our society and our essence is in place.

P.S. *Attentive only is a man who aspires to perceive the world thoroughly.*

Clever is a man who will be able to foresee the future on this basis.

Wise is a man who lives in harmony with his personal perception of the world.

Breakthrough

