
Some Issues Of « Information Society »

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The terms "information society" or "society of knowledge" are more and more often used in the Armenian mass media or by social-political figures. This tendency has come to prove the fact that at the present stage of development in our society are again forming positive attitude to information and its main component - knowledge. At the same time, practical introduction of the mentioned ideas in our reality supposes system-defined changes of society. In other words, the main task of "information society" and many other questions related to it need expert discussions and realization of corresponding projects.

However, all this is more expedient to begin with a brief historical review relating to the terminology in use.

"Information society." This term was first put in use by a professor of Tokyo Technological University Ayashi: basing on the state order in 1969 he studied the influence of the developing by that time computer technologies on society. According to Ayashi's research, computer is a reliable source of information which frees people from everyday routine work, provides high level of autoimmunization of production. It was supposed that the production process itself would also be changed: the result of this process - product - is to become "informatively more bulky," in other words such components are to grow in its price formation as innovation, design and marketing. As a result it was to be formed a society, which was called by the Japan professor "informational." This approach was developed by another Japanese - Masuda. According to his theory "the driving force of a society's development is to be the creation of not material but information product."

To the founders of the conception "information society" is inherent certain utopism: according to them, in such a society there wouldn't be any classes or contradictions, there would be peace and harmony, the big state machinery would not be necessary any more etc. At the same time the influence of "high" and "information" technologies on society was a reality and the ideas of the Japanese were developed in the work of Danielle Belle published in 1973 "Attack of post-industrial society: an attempt of social forecast."

"Post-industrial society." According to Danielle Belle, the history of human society may be divided into agrarian, industrial and post-industrial epochs. The latter one is the result of changes effected in the social structure in the middle of the 20th century: post-industrialization will be a defining social form in the 21st century, and first of all in the US, Japan, Russia and Western Europe. To post-industrial epoch it is inherent transformation from production of goods to production of services in the spheres of health care, education, scientific researches and management. In its turn it brings to specific gravity increase of intellectuals and professionals in society. In the process of making decisions theoretical knowledge acquires great importance: preference is more given to theories than to empiricism.

It should be specially accentuated Belle's broadcast, according to which in "post-industrial society" the main decisions in economics and other spheres is to be made by the government, however, these decisions are to be grounded by scientific researches, draftings and analysis financed by the very government.

Today the decisions in the spheres of home and foreign policy in developed countries (in particular in the US) are mainly made on the basis of projects worked out in "think tanks."

Later on Danielle Belle developed his theory and combined the ideas of "post-industrial" and "information" societies. According to this approach, "information society" is the new name of "post-industrial society" interpreted not as succession of society's development (post-industrial and only than information) but stressing up the main social core of post-industrial society - information.

The scientific community continues studying the influence of up-to-date²⁰ "permanent information revolution" on world society. In this context some standpoints of Hayashi and Belle may at present seem naïve. However, the roles of information factor in all the spheres of the humanity's vital activity only grow, and thus the main classic tenets of the idea "information society" don't lose their actuality.

Knowledge and politics. It is obvious that one of the main indices of the development level and compatibility of any society or state is the extent and quality of information (scientific, technological) resources, as well as organizational capacity and their application in practice. The latest circumstance is extremely important, that's why organization resources are often presented as components of information resources. It is also obvious that the mentioned factors could not but undergo politicization. It is noteworthy that one of the authoritative representatives of the American system of national security, General Washington Plett, considered the most important objective of strategic intelligence acquisition of information about scientific potential and the carriers of the enemy's knowledge.

The American elite, which has such conceptual approaches, takes special interest in its own intellectual resources and is equally attentive to suchlike resources of its rivals. In particular, the victory of Americans in the Cold War was definitely conditioned by their advantage over "Soviets" in the sphere of knowledge, especially in the humanitarian field and the ability to use fundamental results of natural science in practice.

According to some researchers, in the period following the Cold War, one of the main tasks of the US was braking up the quite powerful Soviet scientific system. It should be admitted that the Americans succeeded in carrying out this program¹, and if Russia (today Kazakhstan is following its example) spurs no efforts to improve the situation by means of its great resources, one can't say the same about the other Post-Soviet Republics, including Armenia².

On the Republic of Armenia's scientific-educational field. It is known that Armenia was taking a leading place in the Soviet scientific-technical system. It is to be accepted that by that time our society had more reason to be called "information." It should also be mentioned that at equal starting conditions Armenia's privilege in the scientific-educational field was exceptionally conditioned by our traditional approaches to knowledge and our national specificity on the whole in comparison with other republics. The latest circumstance is extremely important and today is the pledge of the fact that "social knowledge" of the RA may be restored, however a number of objective and subjective factors have come to hinder it.

At the same time it is considered that in the countries where² the income per head makes lower than \$20.000 (in Armenia this income makes \$3000-\$60003),

it is difficult to speak about "information society", and it is an objective reality. At the same time it is obvious that in Armenia short of material resources accelerated development and reaching the necessary economic level is possible only thanks to technologies inherent to "information society." In such a dead-end situation are required non-standard organization approaches, and such "think tanks" where these non-standard ideas and corresponding projects may be born.

At the same time, before making any conceptual decisions one should aspire at least not to worsen the distressing situation in the field of knowledge.

For example, at present quite a big extent of organization resources (as well as material) are spent on so called "commercialization."

However, this process requires developed research-and-productive infrastructures, which don't exist today. From the theory of scientific management it is also known that if fundamental research requires one conventional unit of material expenses, than the creation of pilot technologies on the basis of its results requires 10 units, and commercial investment - 100 units of material resources. It is obvious that today there are not any preconditions for such an activity in Armenia and accumulation of "suggestions of such character" from still working scientific institutions in the fundamental field is at least of artificial and imitation character.

Let's mention that such ineffective measures in the scientific field are single, at that, on this level of development, it is perhaps expedient to stabilize the situation and make an attempt to preserve the extremely depleted rows of the knowledge carriers and it is difficult to imagine any growth without them.

Aspiration to form in Armenia "information/ knowledge society" is more than actual and has no alternatives: other scenarios of development are obvious to be blind. At the same time, this intention is to be realized on the account of creation of different projects and for working them out it is necessary to involve the whole creative potential of the Armenian people.

1Experts with clandestine inclinations even say the name of this program - Silver Key.

2Belorussia and Baltic countries managed to avoid braking up of the scientific system. Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are considered to be the allies of West against Russia, and in Belorussia extremely conservative and, at the same time, flexible policy of the president Lukashenko was not of little importance.

3Such a difference in figures is conditioned by differences in calculating methods used by different organizations.

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