



THE PRINCIPAL FORMS OF NATIONAL VALUES

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Abstract. *This article systematizes the principal forms, or structural components, of the system of national values. It identifies five interrelated forms – the nation's gene pool and natural distinctiveness; its history and spiritual heritage; its territory and material-cultural living conditions; its customs and traditions; and its language, culture, consciousness, and national spirit. Particular attention is given to the gene pool (genofond) as a core natural-historical value and to love of the homeland as a fundamental value, illustrated with historical examples. The article argues that protecting these values is a state-level task tied to the cultivation of a healthy generation.*

Keywords: *national values, gene pool (genofond), homeland, spiritual heritage, traditions, national identity, healthy generation, natural-historical community.*

INTRODUCTION

In its relatively stable state, the system of national values can be analyzed into the following forms, or structural components. The study of national values requires, first of all, attention to the natural-historical values bound up with a nation's emergence, past, present, and future. For the people who constitute it, every nation is valued, first, as a natural-historical unity possessing its own unique features unlike those of other peoples and nations of the world; and, in addition, every nation is a social unity that expresses the dialectical harmony of the diverse, renewing strata and classes that change in the course of historical development (Smith, 1991).

– The nation's gene pool, natural uniqueness, distinctiveness, historical variability, and social diversity.

– The nation's history, past, future, and spiritual heritage.

- National territory, material and cultural living conditions, and aspects connected with the economic base and social superstructure.
- Customs, traditions, rituals, and the national character of the way of life, together with the distinctive features associated with them.
- National language, national culture and spirituality, national consciousness and the national spirit, national feelings and ideas.

MAIN PART

The Gene Pool as a Core National Value

The most fundamental value connected with a nation's distinctiveness, uniqueness, diversity, and change in the social process is its gene pool (genofond). The gene pool is not merely a natural distinctiveness transmitted through heredity; it also embodies historical features, characteristics, diversity, and variability. It is not by chance that aggression aimed at destroying a particular people or nation is termed 'genocide.' The nation's gene pool is one of its most fundamental historical and national values. In books, treatises, and articles published abroad, in the CIS countries, and in Uzbekistan, there exist some twenty definitions connected with the gene pool; in the majority of them, the concept denotes the sum of the natural and biological features formed by the long residence of a particular natural-historical or biological unity in a given territory and transmitted from generation to generation. The concept of the gene pool proves, in particular, that peoples formed from kindred nations may exist as a historical unity over a relatively long period of social development.

A nation may gradually change or diminish as a result of historical changes, wars, and massacres. But a change in its gene pool leads to a nation's extremely rapid transformation and to the swift loss of the natural-historical traits inherited from its ancestors.

The Neglect of the Gene Pool in the Soviet Period

In the former Soviet Union, over the last fifty years no research was conducted on the problems of preserving the gene pool of nations. In our view, there were specific reasons for this. First, any scientific study of the social gene pool would have acknowledged that its object – a nation, people, or ethnic group – is historically unique and the product of processes realized over a long period of social development; this did not accord with the

Stalinist theory of nations. Second, such research would have confirmed that national gene pools formed in the course of historical development do not change quickly but rather over a longer term, which hindered efforts to prove the possibility of nations rapidly merging to create a ‘Soviet people.’

During the seventy years of ‘socialist experiments’ in the former USSR, the various repressions, wars, the deportation of whole nations from their historical homeland, the mass migration of large parts of the population under false slogans, ecological crises, and the like could not but have a negative effect on the gene pool of the country’s peoples and nations. This began to alarm many progressive people, scholars, and intellectuals. The renowned Kyrgyz writer Ch. Aytmatov raised the question of the ‘mankurts’ – precisely the problem of people indifferent to the gene pool – while V. Astafyev asked whether the gene pool of the people had been altered by the processes described above. The negative consequences of the misguided policy waged against nations over many years were thus exposed; the term ‘genocide’ itself (its first element from the Greek for ‘kin’ or ‘tribe,’ and its second from the Latin ‘to kill’) captured the nature of this open-ended war against peoples large and small.

It is therefore no accident that in present-day Uzbekistan special attention is given to this matter, and that cultivating a healthy generation and improving the people’s gene pool have become a nationwide task. The nation’s gene pool signifies its uniqueness, and this uniqueness shows that the nation is bound up with particular periods of its historical development. Evaluating this uniqueness from a universal-human standpoint rests on the objective promotion of one’s own nation’s values without harming the values of other nations. The ‘For a Healthy Generation’ movement in Uzbekistan is, indeed, an activity for the perfection of the whole people residing in the territory of the republic (Karimov, 2008).

Love of the Homeland as a Fundamental Value

National values take shape in connection with people’s places of residence and living conditions. The most fundamental of such values is the feeling of love for one’s birthplace and native land. Love of the homeland is the affection felt toward the social, economic, and cultural environment and the territory connected with the past of the historical unity to which a person belongs and in which he was born and raised. This is a feeling common to all of humanity. It is characteristic of the representatives of every

nation, and there is no basis for saying that it is more developed in one people and less in another. The feeling of homeland is a natural-social feeling directed toward the place that brought a particular historical unity into being and sustains it – proof that a person of any nation is closely bound to nature and is a child of humankind.

People are bound to their ethnic space by natural-historical ties. Yet there are many nations in the world that have lost their homeland or been separated from it. The Jews who lived in the territory of present-day Israel in the second and first millennia BCE were forced to live elsewhere, first as a result of wars with Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria (sixth–second centuries BCE) and later after the defeat of the Jewish revolt against the Romans who had conquered the land (70 CE). Yet they did not lose the feeling of homeland. A demand based on this feeling led, on November 29, 1947, to the UN General Assembly’s resolution to establish two independent states – Israel and Palestine – and the State of Israel was founded on May 14, 1948. However, the misuse of the Jewish people’s homeland sentiment for political ends led to the occupation of lands allotted to the Palestinian state, which has hindered the realization of the Palestinian people’s aspirations connected with their own feeling of homeland – a situation contrary to universal-human principles.

CONCLUSION

The system of national values is composed of several interrelated forms, among which the natural-historical values – the nation’s gene pool and its bond with its homeland – occupy a foundational place. Preserving the gene pool and cultivating a healthy generation are tasks of state significance, while love of the homeland is a universal human value that nonetheless takes concrete national form. The historical experience of the Soviet period demonstrates the damage that results when these values are neglected or manipulated, and it underscores the importance of studying and protecting national values objectively and in harmony with universal human principles.

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