

# NATIONALISM, LIBERALISM, AND CAPITALISM

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**When Saudi Arabia and Egypt become subordinated to the rich countries, this means that their economic development is slow.**

*The Economist* (July 17) published an editorial on Egypt and Saudi Arabia (two dictatorial countries allied to the United States in the Middle East) and expressed hope that they would become democratic in the future. It is surprising, however, that in the same issue the magazine does a favorable review of a book by Stephen Kinzer, a former *New York Times* journalist, who, after analyzing the nationalist and capitalist revolutions under way in those countries since the 1920s, defends the alliance of the United States with Turkey and Iran. Maybe this attitude of the great liberal magazine is a sign of the times. Maybe it reflects the demoralization of the “globalist” ideology which characterized the 30 Neoliberal Years of Capitalism (1979-2008) – an ideology that condemned developing countries' nationalism, while rich countries practiced without hesitation their own nationalism.

Historically, liberalism and economic nationalism have always opposed each other, but they are complementary ideologies. Nation-states were formed through nationalism, and it was this process that allowed their frontiers to be extended and broad and sure domestic markets to be formed, making industrialization possible. In other words, it was through a combination of nationalism and liberalism that Nation-states such as Great Britain, France, and the United States achieved their capitalist revolutions. Globalism was only able to criticize economic nationalism (forgetting how different it is from the dreadful ethnic nationalism) because rich countries' nationalism was not in danger: nobody in

those countries doubts that their government's role is to protect national work, knowledge, and capital.

Evidently, a world without nationalisms would be better, but that would be a fantasy world. In fact, world society is today organized in families, organizations, and Nation-states. It is expected that each individual first shows solidarity with its family, with the organizations in which he participates, and with his country, so that he could later pursue common interests and defend cooperation between everyone. Globalism teaches that rich countries are ready to cooperate, and the dependent elites believe it; they do not realize that what really moves them are their national interests.

When countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt become subordinated to the rich countries, this means that their elites are alienated, that their economic development is slow, that corruption is high, and that economic inequality is simply increasing. When countries such as Iran use religion to strengthen their nationalism, they are adopting an old practice to achieve national cohesion and to complete their capitalist revolution – an essential condition for them to become consolidated democracies. As long as rich countries do not understand that this religious nationalism is not against them, as long as their spokespersons continue to criticize Iran's authoritarian government, as long as they support dictatorships that offer no prospects for their people, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, they will be trading short-term interests of some of their enterprises for their own national interest.