



**Keith Hart** is a professor of Anthropology at Goldsmiths University in London, author of many books on economic anthropology. He created the concept of “informal economy” (part of the economy, that is not included in any gross national product (GNP) – [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Informal\\_sector](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Informal_sector)

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**Nika: In the 60-s, it seemed that after the horrors of World War 2, the world had been vaccinated against nationalism.**

**But today nationalism raises his head all over again.**

***Keith Hart:***

Nationalism is an obvious response to an economic decline.

You know, that the British have introduced national passports only in 1920? Up until that point, anyone could come to England and become an Englishman. England was so confident in its power and ability to extract economic benefits from any immigrants that no border barriers were needed.

In America, this belief persists to this day.

Modern Englishmen have no grounds to assume that they govern the world, so for those who wish to join us, we build barriers.

The economy of North America and Europe is on the verge of collapse. We have neither the time nor space for novices!

The main issue is that already for 500 years; the West is living on the goods that it takes from other countries.

Not long ago, though, the situation began to change. Countries such as China, Brazil, India, and several African nations have recently put forth serious claims for economic and political independence.

But we do not want to admit it. I do not think we'll ever agree with such a situation.

**Nika: Really hard to admit that one used to live at the expense of someone else.**

**Do you think that it will lead to a new anti-immigration law in Europe?**

***Keith Hart:***

We reproduce too slowly, and we grow old fast, that's why we have to bring in immigrants so that they could work hard for us, and we could hate them for it.

Europeans are most likely to do the same thing that the Americans have already done. They will introduce four categories of citizens: the actual citizens with full rights and above all with the right to exploit people that have other statuses than their own; then the green card holders (the same kind of citizens only without political rights). The last two categories will include illegal immigrants and prisoners, the amount of which, by the way, is persistently growing.

**Nika: Doesn't the possibility of building a genuinely democratic society rely on the conception of citizenship of "liberty, equality, and fraternity"?**

*Keith Hart*:: Democracy and the concept of "citizen" are falling apart. In the world today, there are huge changes.

Just very recently, nobody would have believed that in the Scandinavian countries, in Holland, the Right could potentially come to power. Just look at the percentage of votes that the nationalist party in France "Le Pen" receives.

Now it is not about democracy; everyone is trying to snatch a piece from disappearing right on our eyes pie.

**Nika: Today, nationalism sometimes seems almost progressive phenomenon that protects local societies and cultures from the negative effects of globalization - multinational corporations, over developments, and the waves of a financial crisis.**

*Keith Hart*:: It is interesting that the state is becoming more and more nationalistic while society as a whole is becoming rather more global. The problems that we face are ecological and economical, and they cannot be resolved by any national government.

Such problems just cannot be solved on the national level. Therefore international social nonpartisan movements are gaining power.

We need some form of global supernational government. As I said, these problems are global problems and to resolve them on a national level is impossible. That's why national states are in decline. They do not have a chance to survive in any case.

The fact that such organizations as the European Union, NAFTA, the International Monetary Fund and others have proved to be not only ineffective but also demonstrated anti-social nature of its activities does not mean that international organizations are not needed.

It means only that they should be organized differently.

The emergence of such structures was a response to the challenges. We just need to keep trying, and eventually, we will form structures that will be able to respond to the challenges that humanity faces today adequately.

**Nika: Nationalism could be understood as a particular definition of belonging, on drawing a border between those that belong to a community and those that don't. How does nationalism manifest itself in different types of states?**

**Keith Hart:** Nationalism is a very peculiar phenomenon. First of all, it is a belief that we are one nation, and that is why we need a national government. For instance, Israel and Czechoslovakia are nation-states, whereas countries such as Russia and U.S. are federations. China, in this regard, has a long history. The Chinese believe that they are the whole world.

**Nika: Does the rise of the nationalism mean that the idea of multinational society is in decline?**

**Keith Hart:** That's not entirely true .. The world is vast and diverse. Let's take Africa: in some countries, there are from 15 to 20 different nationalities, and each has its own language. Kenya, for example, in this country, people are much more likely to associate themselves with a local ethnic group and its language than with the state.

Alternately, let's look at India, Brazil, or Canada. These are all federations. They are not nation-states. For many years I predicted that England has at least 15 constitutional issues, and each one of them can destroy the country. However, everything is still in its place. Or take a look at Nigeria. Everyone says that it has many problems; there is even a civil war. But so far, no one managed to demolish Nigeria.

**Nika: How do we deal with national identity then? For most people, it is essential.**

**Keith Hart:**

If I am asked, "Where are you from?" I reply that I'm from Manchester.

The identification with the U.K. is for me less important.

On the contrary, we as Manchestrans have a lot of claims against England.

But I love England. I am proud of this country. In particular, I am proud of the fact that we were able to rise up against Hitler's Germany. It was a pretty desperate act since the Germans blew us to pieces.

Until the mid 50's we, in fact, lived in ruins. But we were not scared!

In a sense, people need to get to the point of total despair and lose everything so that they could realize the need for change.

After the Second World War in England, a radical socialist government was elected. We still enjoy the fruits of that choice. Our welfare system was born back then.

But it took two terrible wars for the public to realize that "that's it, it's impossible to carry on living like that. We need to change something! "

I think that now we are standing on the verge of a major war. Otherwise, no one will ever understand anything. People are too comfortable with their lives.

**Nika: Would another war be even felt by the West? After WW2, we entered the nuclear age, in which wars are being led abroad, and people in the West see them in televisions.**

**Keith Hart:** America has enough control over the situation in the world to allow all that to happen, not on its own territory but somewhere else in someone else's yard.

**Nika: Returning to the original question of nationalism: do you think it could play a role of ideological justification for the use of physical force?**

**Keith Hart::** Of course! Up to 40 percent of the U.S. budget is spent by the Pentagon. It has to fight to justify its existence. But nationalism is the last hope for governments that are losing its control over the economic problems, over the economic problems that they created themselves.

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