

LABOUR ETHICS IN THE SYSTEM OF POST-SOVIET RUSSIA'S TRANSFORMATIONS

The President of Russia Vladimir Putin, who got the convincing mandate of voters' trust for the next 6-year period at the 2018 elections, worded his strategic vision of the national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period till 2024 in his Decree of May 7, 2018, setting respective tasks for the new Government of the country.

It's interesting that he is speaking about the program for peace and social state building in the environment of the going on struggle against terrorism and sharp aggravation of the situation in the world, intensification of the threat of direct armed conflict with the West.

The interests of a common citizen are regarded as of paramount importance: sustainable growth of his actual incomes, improvement of living conditions, prolongation of lifespan, providing conditions for the population growth, etc.

It is supposed to attain that at the expense of the Russian Federation's becoming one of the five biggest economies in the world. The basis of economic development is seen in technological progress, innovations, personnel's training.

This vision of goals and tasks contains a lot of new in stylistics of statements and figures, but the approach has not been principally changed already for about 20 years, from the time when Vladimir Putin seriously got down to the state's strengthening and realization of the key provisions of the Russian Constitution after becoming the head of state.

There is no doubt that many of the tasks set by him have been solved. A lot was done to strengthen the vertical power structure, preventing the most

negative economic development scenarios, relative stabilization of the socioeconomic situation, strengthening of national sovereignty of the country and many other things.

At the same time, there are still a number of negative processes in science, culture, education, mass communications' activities, functioning of state administration and business structures, law enforcement system, etc. And that takes place in the environment when external threats are intensified; global competition is becoming fiercer and has already developed into confrontations in a number of areas.

It should be stated that on the whole after the USSR disintegration, Russia has not managed to form a socioeconomic system, competitive to fight for the leadership in the world. It's enough to say that at the time of his being at the head of the state Vladimir Putin set the task of becoming one of the five leading economies in the world 6 times already.

And that brings the analogy with the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union N.S. Khrushchev to mind of the older generation. Khrushchev announced at the XXII Congress of the Communist Party in 1961 that "our generation of Soviet people will live in Communism". He spoke about entering Communism in 1980. The task of that time "Let's catch up with America and surpass it" is also well-known.

The middle generation of the Russians remembers Boris Yeltsin's promise "to lie on the rails" if the initiated by him liberal economic reforms lead to increase of prices more than three-four times (prices increased 26 times by January 2, 1992, and actual incomes of the people decreased down to 44% of the 1991 level).

Such failures contrast with numerous examples of positive results of national upswings of the 20th century. West Germany, Japan, South Korea,

Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China – all these countries achieved “economic miracle” applying economic models with special national features. And originality in each case was based on deep understanding of national culture, traditions, character and mentality of the people. At the same time, a number of traditions, contrary to the interests of development were suppressed, and special cultural features and features of national mentality were sometimes thought up and introduced into the consciousness of the citizens.

Some countries proceeded from archaic, semi-feudal economic patterns, the others proceeded from totalitarian (Communist or Fascist), the third from liberal.

In any case, economic upswings took place in the environment of national consensuses in the moral field. First of all, civil and labour. These consensuses encompassed all strata of the population except criminal, outlaws. The latter were fought against mercilessly.

It should be emphasized that the law and its protection, law enforcement (tough regulators) were supported by soft regulators – social climate, ideology shared by bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, hired workers, prominent figures in the fields of science, culture, arts, mass media personnel. Success in economy was never possible in the environment of total erosion of morals, in case various strata of the society had different basic values.

Surely, the talks about “digital economy”, the development of which will compensate the weaknesses of real economy, are in fashion in Russia now. It’s similar to recent declarations by bureaucrats about the forthcoming success in “nanotechnologies” that turned into production of “nanobricks”, building “nanoroads” and other economic “miracles” in the long-suffering

country. There are also futuristic forecasts about robots fully replacing people, and workers, guards and drivers sitting in bars, drinking beer in front of TV screens. Writers, actors and directors, artists, conductors and musicians, who will be also soon replaced by computers, will keep them company.

Really the Government of the country is getting ready to raise retirement age, and entrepreneurs are incessantly looking for ways to curtail rights of hired workers.

Is it possible to achieve success in competing with the leading economies when the ethics of bureaucrats, businessmen, hired workers in the country is based exclusively on the principle of personal, individual material profits, ignoring the interests of a certain enterprise, sector, product consumer, the country? Is it possible to expect conscientious attitude to labour, high-quality work, increase of efficiency from an employee, if his labour ethics differs from the ethics of the enterprise owner, bureaucrats checking the owner, the ethics of producers of goods and services he buys on his wages, the ethics of producers of social benefits?

Can the population of Russia be a set of “self-interested atoms not connected by anything”, or in order to achieve success it should be transformed into a nation united by a common interest, and who should look after such a union? Or, may be, it’s enough for the authorities to proclaim slogans and after that everything will take care of itself, isn’t it? I think that these issues are becoming especially urgent now.

Meanwhile, independent of public declarations, the authorities have been embarked on the course of increasing bureaucracy and expanding accounting and record keeping for many years already, absolutely ignoring

soft regulators of vital activities and engaged in formation of social consensus just in certain political issues.

The complexity of the state of affairs is brought about by Russia's entering the critical period, the systemic crisis, when the problem of "to be, or not to be" should be solved in the near future on the basis of the new development scenario's selection and the ways of its embodiment. The time-limits for a modernization spurt in the context of the dynamically changing world are shrinking, in the opinion of experts, down to a decade. The erroneously selected scenarios will not only fail to bring Russia into the five leading world economies, but will not allow it to become one of the ten.

The Russian model of social and labour relations has been in transformation crisis since the 1990s. The socioeconomic formation established in the USSR is destroyed. And it is evident that the new one is built extremely poorly. The existing market mechanisms are ineffective, traditional stereotypes of labour behaviour are deformed, socioeconomic inequality increased in the country. Violations of the social rights of the working people, intensification of social alienation and lowering the prestige of productive and conscientious labour are evident.

It's possible to single out the following among the clearly fixed manifestations of crisis: a) giant sector of informal labour relations, preventing formation of socially oriented economy; b) non-transparency of economic activities; c) corruption of controlling authorities; d) weakness of the law enforcement system, legal nihilism of the people.

It seems that destructive trends in the sphere of social and labour relations in principle can't be overcome by the existing institutes of law. Unfortunately, legal nihilism is demonstrated not only by the key actors of

the social and labour sphere (business, state structures, hired workers) but also by the personnel of the law enforcement system.

Legal nihilism was laid as the foundation for transfer of the country from the command and administration system to the market, it became the domineering vector of ideological changes, embodied in the idea of money as the main value and the meaning of human life, criterion of individual's importance, and enrichment as the highest form of human activities. All basic values of the previous society, their hierarchy were totally revised. And the new ideology has not been essentially changed from the beginning of the 1990s till the present time and became the genetic code of the new socioeconomic formation.

It seems that the most significant cultural symbol of our times is the large-scaled privatization of the 1990s that was openly illegal, and that predetermined all the following deformations of the system of political and legal, and socioeconomic relations in post-Soviet Russia. The authorities chose the scandalously amoral, mocking and derisive in relation to people of the country and the most harmful for the economy privatization variant. According to the World Bank's classification, Russian privatization is classified as insider privatization, which is by an order of magnitude more antihuman than "Machiavellian" carried out by governments in the interests of its followers and supporters, its voters.

It should be noted that the way of Russian reforms in the last quarter of the century radically differs from world practice. The mass media, mass culture force false ideas upon people about the country's movement to building some "society of the Western type" according to some "Western pattern" with giant and indisputable advantages in comparison with everything "non-West".

However, there is no “West” in reality, the image of which is planted in Russia, there are no socioeconomic relations cultivated by Russian bureaucracy. The country deals with noncritical borrowings of superficially studied and wrongly comprehended mechanisms and phenomena. No matter if we are speaking about the country’s inclusion in the Bologna Process, building Skolkovo, regulation of mass media activities, contests for state orders, reorganization of the scientific research system, youth policy, etc.

The result of the transformations in Russia over the quarter of the century is formation of the unique and extremely ineffective ultra-liberal model of socioeconomic arrangement. At the time when the leading world powers are developing along the course of the theory of convergence, when the set of socioeconomic development tools of the countries is incessantly replenished by the best achievements of socialism and capitalism. At the same time, there is no set of universal achievements in the world that are the best. The best is what can be the most effective in this or that certain national-cultural and socioeconomic situation (O. Bogomolov).

At the same time, the West gradually loses its leading role, stopping to be the standard of development for all the rest of the world, except Russia, in recent decades. This is related to the general development crisis of the technology-related type of civilization to a great extent (V. Styopin).

Building “social (welfare) state” and building “the society of consumption” compete and are differently combined in the development of contemporary capitalism.

The West has been the unquestionable leader in the formation of the society of consumption for a long time; however, this also led it to the evident dead-end.

Surely, the social functions of the state gradually strengthened there until recent decades, but still they did not become the leading trends: fundamental changes of the market, its losing the role of the economic development locomotive; deformation of national elites and the loss of their ability to generate new essences, finding out perspective ways of development; total degeneration of democracy; increase of manipulations with the society and annihilation of freedom of speech; destruction of the Christian matrix of culture's development.

The efficiency of classical capitalism was based on the free market with its spontaneous compulsoriness of economic mechanisms. Competition of producers, struggle for satisfaction of consumers' requirements based on production of high-quality products were its foundations. That market has become history.

The production's gravity center shifted from factory shops to people's heads. Material production was driven to the periphery of economy by production of meanings. And the very human needs are produced like products. Contemporary "information society" was not from the moment of its origination and has not become the sphere of free vital activities of the people, showing in essence only the new form of state and monopoly arrangement of production.

The end of the 1960s and the early 1970s is the period when relatively free intellectual life of the West was decisively replaced by the mechanisms of total consciousness' manipulation. The elites' formation and functioning mechanisms are changing radically.

Intellectuals played a special role in the society in the past – writers, philosophers, scientists, professors. They enjoyed considerable freedom in analysis of the reality, generation of ideas and their deliverance to the society,

they considerably influenced its existence, and sometimes it was the main impact. Their dependence on economic and political elites was relatively small.

Later practically all spiritual production in the West was privatized by monopolistic structures. As well as the state. Intellectuals turned into employees of corporations producing ideas on their order and in their interests, more and more often without any connection with the reality or connected to it but not improving it from the point of view of the common good. Big bourgeoisie creates spiritual products in its own mercenary interests and forces them upon the others in the same interests via the mass media system, with the help of mass culture distribution mechanisms. The institutes of democracy are privatized in the same way, and that leads to degeneration of the political class, disappearance of political leaders of Franklin Roosevelt, Charles de Gaulle level.

And it's not accidental that today leaders of the European Union countries with rare exceptions form a uniform line of nondescript bureaucrats, and Donald Trump elected against the will of the established in the United States power elite, is practically deprived of the opportunity to realize his campaign promises.

Turning the freedom of speech and democracy into commodity means Western capitalism's entering the critical degeneration phase. This degeneration is already called malignant. Cultural degeneration of the West, refuse from Christianity with its system of values common for traditional world religions are especially actively criticized by the world community.

The whole range of global crises (exhaustion of energy resources, climate changing, intensification of terrorism, multiplying man-made disasters, pollution of the environment where humans live, etc.) in the world

are more and more tied with the crisis of the Western development model, civilization paradigm.

And the newly appeared Russian elite started cultivating this model on the local ground, and without special understanding of it and without the skills to cultivate anything.

As a result, lack of nationally focused labour ethics based on value dominants of domestic culture became one of the key problems of practically all spheres of social production in Russia. The post-Soviet model of social and labour relations suffers from failure to take national and cultural roots, historically sustainable worldview dominants of national culture are only faintly seen in it. And what is more, the value discord of the ways of production arrangement with deep spiritual foundations of Russian civilization is becoming the source for expanse of space and range of social and labour conflicts.

We have to acknowledge that formation of the social and labour relations model took place in recent decades by non-critical, insufficiently comprehended transfer of Western principles of capitalist economy, production arrangement forms and corporate ethics models to Russian realities by bureaucrats and entrepreneurs. The process of building nationally focused labour ethics was originally blocked by the ultra-liberal “development scenario” for the state and the society that was established as the key criterion of “civilization”.

Meanwhile, the historical experience convincingly certifies the importance of spiritual traditions as the resource for competently carried out economic reforms. For example, technological upswing (starting from the 1960s) in the number of countries in the Pacific region was to a large extent provided by the “cultural factor” - the preserved civilization originality:

traditional ethics of responsibility and law abiding, collective identity of nations, readiness to sacrifice the individual in favour of the common good.

However, the ultra-liberal doctrine brings to the mass consciousness false in its essence understanding of religious, national and cultural differences of nations and countries from the “average European standard” as a negative factor – “archaism”.

Expansion of the Western civilization project to Russian traditions established over many centuries and spiritual experience of the nation is manifested in the form of cultural disintegration of the country – disintegration of the one whole spiritual space of the nation. There are mutually exclusive worldview dominants and conflicting survival strategies and scenarios of the future in case of various strata of the society. The conflict of reproduction and development programs (existential, worldview, political) provokes the social rift that reduces the space for dialogue and stimulates destructive trends in the society.

Contradictions are especially aggravated at the forced modernization stage, when the process of purposeful transformation of the key spheres of social production requires selection of a certain, whole, acceptable for the main part of the society model. The specific character of this stage is sharp aggravation of conflicting opposition of traditions and innovations, to wit: the more dynamic movement to a new economic system and establishment of its worldview basis is, the more considerable is resistance of conservative forces and traditional matrixes of culture. Such asynchrony in dynamics of labour ethics and social and labour relations’ components also expands the space of social and labour conflicts and leads to intensification of social tension.

That economic model can’t originate in cultural vacuum, outside civilization matrixes – it originates based on labour ethics, which is

constituted by culture prevailing over economy, creating it “in its own likeness, in its own image”. Like the man, like the material world created by his hands.

The worldview dominant of culture (P. Sorokin) in its turn and national identity are formed in accordance with human “nature”, human psychophysical characteristics that are determined by geography, history, religion. Capitalism, generated by European civilization, is not only “economic” but also, first of all, a “cultural and anthropologic phenomenon” – it’s well-known that the capitalist model became possible in the environment of essential correction of Christian anthropology (M. Weber).

Nationally focused labour ethics, being the worldview basis of culturally legitimate and socially responsible behaviour of all subjects of social and labour relations, originates as a result of systemic interaction of three groups of factors: a) national culture, determining its spiritual dominants, hierarchy of basic values and sense-making life scenarios; b) nation’s mentality providing wholeness of culture and national originality over a historically long period of time; c) the model of economy, the cornerstones of which are the form of ownership (provided by the institute of law) and the “human factor” of labour activities. Mismatch of these factors again inevitably leads to increase of instability in the society and conflicts in social and labour relations.

At the same time, the national ethos and mental matrixes forming on the basis of psychophysical special features of the people have the biggest inertia and resistance in the environment of economic models and cultural matrixes discord. The mental matrixes are formally outside the labour market but actually they are forming its specific mental infrastructure (E. Sobolev).

It should be acknowledged that real economic upsurge in Russia is only possible in case of formation of nationally focused labour ethics based on value dominants and mental matrixes of domestic culture.

It's necessary for the country to return to economic activities based on the moral decency concept and mutual responsibility of all subjects of social and labour relations; adapt the interests coordination mechanism between producers and consumers to the special features of Russian culture; provide harmonization of the main components of the capitalist management model at the acceptable level and increase investments into development of "human capital" as the factor of stable and long-term development of economy.

In the environment of large-scaled, global technological shifts Russia still has a "window" of opportunities for breakthroughs and making the "economic miracle" (S. Glazyev).

The humanitarian resource for solution of this task is fundamental correction of the ideology of reforms, reassessment of their results and prospects. Economic and political transformations will be successfully realized only in case if they are based on the deep-laid strata of national consciousness and essential characteristics of Russian mentality.

The present and the future of the great Russian civilization depend on the spiritual and moral potential of Russian culture being in demand by the key institutions of national economy.