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Social-Historical Transformations in Russia

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Abstract

In the article, the transformations on the basis of civilized approach with the usage of sociological, axiological, anthropological and historical methods are considered. Widening the term “social transformation”, the authors offer the new one – “social-historical transformation” which is interpreted as a historical process of transformations presented by ecological, socio-cultural, economic, political, individual and other changes. Modality of social transformations becomes the essential part of their value and notion content. There comes the deduction about cultural modality of social transformation domineering at present over political modality in the past.

Keywords: Social transformation, Social-historical transformation, Modality, History, Politics, Methods of social research.

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1. Introduction

The notion of social-historical transformation is the result of widening the notion of social-political transformation by including the features of cultural-ecological and other factors. In Russian historical science, the term “social-political transformation” is applied while considering the radical transformation of the whole system of state and social management, beginning from 1917. Social, political and other transformations on the post-Soviet territory, as well as qualitative changes of the Russian society’s vital activity, especially its geo-political status, scientific approaches to the conceptualization of these processes in political and social sciences, identified the boundaries of understanding the evolution of social bodies during their transformation.

2. Question about distinctive features of social transformations in Russia

Social and social-political transformations are studied by A.S. Akhieser (2002), I. Wallerstein (2000), V.S. Leshukov (2012), M.V. Maslovsky (2004) and others. In this connection, one of the aims of this article is considering social transformations of social and political structures of the old Russian and new Soviet society in the first half of the XXth century, which allows to speak widely about the peculiarities of social-political transformations throughout Russian history, offering the prospects for analysis of the present-day social-historical transformation in Russia with consideration of specific historical principles.

N.A. Berdiaev (1990 and 2006) pointed out the factors of forming the national character, which influenced social transformations. We’d like to summarize the historical research of the main problem of the political system formation in Soviet Russia as integrity, revealing the diversified modality of social-historical transformations with the political modality prevailing.

Popular ideas of such revolutionary scenario authors as K. Marx and V.I. Lenin in particular, who spoke of destroying the state and revolution, were replaced by the ideas of M. Weber, P.A. Sorokin (2000) and those who approve of the smooth justified social-political transformations. In other words, XXth century revolutions reveal the hidden historical tendencies of the society’s development. We speak here of the paternalistic tendency in the Russian political life. A subject instead of a citizen, a serf instead of a free person – all these are distinctive features of anthropological and cultural tradition in the political sphere of Russia.

3. Social-political transformations

Let’s outline the interrelation between the social-political and socio-cultural transformation in the history of Russia.

One of the problems, important for the proper understanding Russian history, of the XXth century's in particular, is the problem of the origination of Soviet political system. October Revolution became the turning point of modern Russian history which determined the objective boundaries of transformations in Russia and their shape. This problem remains to be the focus of consideration by political ideologists who contend for people's awareness.

To be exact, October Revolution set up the new era of managing global social processes in regions, countries, unions and the world community (Mintz, 1979). In our opinion, XXth century revolutions are far from being spontaneous social sudden changes like those in XVIII-XIXth centuries, but the purposeful system of actions and experiments whose scale and consequences could be compared to the atomic bomb testing on people, cities, and countries. The matter is that behind the façade of history-telling (do not confuse it with the historical science), appeared the science, accurate enough. Applying this science for political purposes without moral responsibility should be recognized as the most dangerous crime which results in social, scientific and technological, human and cultural consequences of destructive character.

Social characteristic itself and ways of its development have changed (Wallerstein, 2000). Physicists and historians as pure theoreticians have been replaced by scientists-engineers and technologists who project sociality. Social disasters have become thoroughly planned and realized scenarios. As a result, "social engineers" in the late XX – early XXI centuries began talking about the so called "end of history", God's "playing" instead of disposition or the natural historical necessity for the new subject for determining the objectives and regulating historical process.

Theoretical and methodological base for such a research of social transformations should be presented by the hierarchic interrelated conceptual system where the formation of a political system is shown as a multi-aspect process of disintegrating the social and political system of old Russian Republic. Political transformations led to reduction of democratic social organizations and unions. Formation of the one-party political system was accomplished in the 30-s. By that time the system of social organizations, cooperatives and trade unions under the Bolsheviks control had been built.

Among non-Bolshevik political alternatives for social-state organizations, the most interesting is presented by the socialists-revolutionary. Such organizations were meant to build the grounds for the confidence between state and society, made civil peace, began steady moving towards socialism. They intended to use such organizations for harmonizing the interests of state, society, certain professional groups turning them into the uniting power in the new

Russian society. There was neither wish, nor readiness from the Bolsheviks to do such cooperation.

The most important aspect in the transformations stated above was that in their program, the Bolsheviks declared establishing the Republic on the base of the free union of all nations, the federation of republics instead of former administrative and territorial units, which resulted in autonomy, political and administrative (republic and region), and created the asymmetrical model of federation threatening with conflicts nowadays.

The Soviet one-party system of Russia in the period of its forming comes out as a complexity of old and new state power system. General patterns of relationship of the Soviet political system were based on Russian cultural and social type peculiarities. Non-resistance to evil, accompanied by the violence of state over individuality, levels this individuality. The history of social and political transformations in the period 1917-1930 is the evidence of reducing the number of alternatives for the society development. Russian communism is a consequential multi-aspect phenomenon though not fully understood.

4. Socio-cultural changes as the base for social transformations in the history of Russia

The most distinctive feature of Russian history consists in domineering the principle of collectivity. The subject of socio-cultural influence is collegiate. Cultural grounds for social-political transformations in post-revolutionary Russia meant the spiritual culture becoming mass-related. That's why the social subject didn't turn into the autonomous subject of social influence, which made it possible to manipulate the social awareness by social influence.

In this sense, the spiritual culture became mass-related long before the mass culture in the West, which base was formed by functioning mass media. In our view, the technique of awareness manipulating included, beside the cinema and radio, other mechanisms of "social machine" (by Mumford), i.e. powerful collective mechanisms of oral agitation and propaganda, collective actions. Semiotic grounds for such socio-cultural transformations became newspapers and the cinema. They made impact on mentality of both city-dwellers and villagers. Political ideology of coercion and violence penetrated into all crypto-standardized forms of culture. Everyday life was transformed too, with the means of total control over the mass awareness, e.g. the new language. Diversity was replaced by uniformity, cultural plurality – by monism and monologues. Refusal of humanistic tradition in Russian history was accompanied by spreading of "proletarian culture" in its politically loaded form.

At the same time, there was observed the increase of social energy during the Great Patriotic War, which could be explained by joining all the constituents of socio-cultural transformation

in the USSR. The war softened the violence mechanism as a means of social modernization because the violence was redirected outward. There came symptoms of the society invigoration: patriotism stepped forth while proletarian internationalism stepped aside. Aspiration for democracy was felt in the society. Personality with strengthened morale began transforming into citizen. With the clergy rehabilitated, people were turning to religion and the church started reviving. Striving for education, spiritual culture and morality increased.

Coming back to the main idea, let's emphasize that general patterns of the Soviet state and political system genesis were based on the national culture and Russian character distinctive features. The popular non-resistance to evil (a-la Tolstoy) is balanced by the super violence of the state over individuality and its leveling. Evolution of social and political transformations in the period of the 1917 revolutions to 1930s presents the process of reducing the number of alternatives for development and mass-making in the structure of the Soviet society. The phenomenon of "Russian communism" can be explained through revealing the interrelation of politics, human being and culture. Socio-cultural transformations both depend on social and political transformations and serve as the base for further political transformations.

One of the most important historical lessons is the transfer from the Soviet system to the post-Soviet transformations of Russian society, which was not a revolutionary transformation as there was no direct armed violence. One of the main factors that influenced the society was the massive impact of the new powerful resource of information culture on the Russian social awareness (Shapovalov, 2010).

Human factor of social transformations in Russia wasn't properly formed to meet the determined transformations in 1980-90s. Personality in Russia was traditionally weak so during perestroika it was taken over by various political and cultural manipulators.

The problem of political pluralism is closely connected with the issues of forming civil society which should link private and social interests in Russia while solving problems of property in the interests of people. Nevertheless, it's not the time for talking about political plurality (Ivankov, 2014). It's going to be the prospect for Russian society.

5. Conclusion

We see that studying present day social transformations calls for turning to the history of culture and methodology of civilized approach. Transformations of socio-cultural space of Russia determined by exogenous factors and characterized by certain features. The main difference of Russian social transformations from those in the West is that they are not stable, close to the so called "dynamic chaos" in terms of synergetic. As there is a variety of

distinctive features of the process of social transformations which include political, economic, social and cultural spheres of social life in Russia and European countries, it's hardly ever possible to understand the process in its systematic view as a whole and reveal its tendencies.

Transformation of society presents a natural historical process. The new term “social-historical transformation” that reflects all the system of factors, measurements and modalities of social transformations can be introduced. Social-historical transformation can be interpreted as the historical process of cultural and social changes which include ecological, cultural, economic, political, individual, and other components of social changes interrelated. Being historical, social transformations are poly-modal as well. Social-historical transformation in Russia has always been characterized by domineering of the political modality. At present, political domineering is explained by strengthening of the cultural modality of social transformations. Thus, the conducted researches will become an integral part in the model of multimodal socio-historical transformations.

Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that the data produced do not contain the conflict of interest.

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