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Russian Social-Democratic Modernization Project in the Cultural and Ontological Contexts*

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Abstract

The article raises the relevant problem of the popularity of social democratic values in Russia and the difficulties of their ontologization in the modern political process. The modernization project of Russian statehood needs further theoretical development of the social-democratic idea in relation to Russian conditions. The axiological proximity of the social-democratic ideology to the needs of Russian society is, however, possible with regard to the pluralism of the argumentation of the basic values - freedom, social justice, equality, democracy, solidarity. The axiological pluralism makes Russian specificity acceptable in interpreting the values of social-democracy taking into account the peculiarities of the Russian historical path and the spiritual state of society. The "third way" for modern Russia is real in implementing the transformation of Russian statehood on the basis of the values of democratic socialism (social justice, equality, freedom, solidarity) and the concrete political, historical and cultural dimension of the nature of modern power.

Keywords: Social-democratic idea, Values of democratic socialism, Social-democracy, Russian statehood, Modernization project, Freedom, Equality, Justice, Ideocratic nature of power.

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Introduction

The social-democracy as an alternative to the liberal-democratic modernization of Russian statehood deserves attention for a number of reasons [1].

Firstly, this is due to the growing popularity of the social-democratic idea among the "ruling upper classes" and the Russian humanitarian intelligentsia since the 1990s, and, in organizational terms, the emergence of numerous social-democratic associations giving preference to the classical values of democratic socialism (social justice, freedom, equality, solidarity and democracy).

Secondly, this is due to the need for further theoretical development of the social-democratic idea in relation to Russian conditions, as evidenced by the scientific discussions about the political prospects of social democracy in modern Russia, its correlation with liberalism, the historical typology of social democratic ideology, etc.

Thirdly, it is due to the pluralism of practical preferences of the social-democratic parties and movements in the system of the modern Russian multi-party system:

- accurate adherence to the classical traditions of social-democracy by transferring them to the Russian ground;
- attempts to create a social-democratic party with Russian specifics;
- opportunistic use of the social-democratic slogans in the struggle for power based on establishing a short-term partnership with liberal-democratic, national-patriotic and neo-Eurasian associations.

It should be borne in mind that the logic of considering alternative paradigms for the transformation of modern Russian statehood is built in a certain sequence: from the analysis of original foundations to the comprehension of integrative principles, including the uniqueness for their subsequent reformation within the framework of a new integrity, which presuppose the substantiation and implementation of the "third way" [2].

In addition, according to L.A. Tikhomirov, each nation has its own ways of cultural and state development. The nation is the power that creates the supreme power. The various forms of supreme power reflect the kind of power the nation trusts the most of all according to its moral state. The change in the forms of supreme power shall be interpreted as the evolution of national life, and not as the evolution of power itself [3].

Methods

The methodological basis of research is based on the modern political science developments, as well as on the sociophilosophical and methodological ideas in the field of the history of political doctrines that belong to domestic and foreign specialists.

The study of cultural and ontological aspects of the domestic social-democratic modernization project includes general, general scientific and specific scientific methods, among which one should especially highlight such as dialectical, hermeneutic, system-structural analysis, sociological measurement, comparative-historical, comparative-political and others.

Discussion

Among the original foundations of traditional Russian statehood, it is necessary to single out its ideocratic nature, that is, a special transcendental conditioning, dependence on some "supreme power" (God, ideology) provided by the spiritual unity of the Russian people.

I.A. Ilyin considered statehood to be powerfully inspired by the people's solidarization, which is supported by a healthy "state-minded sense of justice", "the power of patriotic love" and the spiritual foundations of the human soul (faith, love, freedom, conscience, family, motherland, nationalism) [4].

In the scientific constructions of I.A. Ilyin, statehood acts as the "people's substance". (strong statehood means a strong nationality, and vice versa) [5]. The presence of a unified statehood actually ensures the greatness and value of Russian statehood. Russia remained great until the collapse of the USSR due to a unified power, historically based on the people's preferences, taking into account its transcendental essence.

The driving force of traditional political relations was faith (in God, in socialist values), which meant a voluntary and conscious fulfillment of the will of the supreme ruler (tsar, secretary general). This feature of the Russian statehood has repeatedly received a negative evaluation as a special state despotism, which suppresses the freedom and creativity of the people, in the studies of the West-oriented scientists [6].

At the same time, it is obvious that the statehood shall be adequate to the value orientations of the people. If the political system of Western countries is based on formal law, then this is a reflection of European political and legal traditions that presuppose the activities and behavior of people at their discretion within the law. The freedom as a self-determination based on the law and the personal responsibility of everyone for their social being became later the basis of the rule of law and the Western way of life.

Political freedom in its Western European understanding was completely absent in the worldview of the Russian people. A more complex philosophical understanding of freedom as trust in power (rather than participation and control) is one of the most important factors in creating an original Russian statehood. The Western European understanding of freedom, imposed on modern Russia, was expressed in permissiveness. The honest and free elections have become an illusion. The laws are not fulfilled, the statehood is weakened. There is a question: where should we look for justice? Most likely - not in law.

The law is established without taking into account the individual searches by the person for justice as the highest expression of truth. The only way to make the truth (justice) the highest norm of social life is to search for it in the moral determinants of the individual's development. After all, the laws are good in how they are applied, and the application depends on whether the person is under the authority of the higher truth [7].

There is only one way for Russia - to restore the mutual trust between the society and the authorities. Based on the liberal-democratic values, this is impossible, since the Russian people are dealing with two completely different political and state traditions that do not allow Western rationality taking its root in Russia and placing Russian spirituality in the European states.

Thus, the individual power as the principle of the state structure in its spiritual, moral, mental and sociocultural conditioning, and the ideocratic nature of the supreme power can be claimed in the social-democratic project of modernizing Russian society as a sociocultural and state-legal matrix of identity [8].

At the same time, according to V.G. Fedotova, the difficulties of Russian reform are connected with the globalization processes that make it difficult to choose the modernization models and strategies to a large extent. The national modernization model is currently oriented towards the basic model of the third way developed by E. Giddens, which stipulates the reform of the state, its transformation into a social state of a special type, combining the global free market with the social policy adequate to the new conditions [9].

V.G. Fedotova distinguishes four types of Russian future in the context of modernization processes: images-scenarios - a kind of vision that can be embodied in the ideology; scenarios-trends - identification of

objective trends of a possible future; scenarios-projects, where this future is constructed; scenarios-ideologies, where the design is associated with the promotion of integration ideas.

In practical terms, it is appropriate to use all four types of scenarios for social construction to find answers to the following questions: what do we want? Is this objectively possible? What project is proposed for this? What ideology does serve the solution of modernization tasks? [10].

The Social-Democratic paradigm of reforming the Russian society as a real strategy for the socialism renewal and an alternative "third way" to overcome the liberal-democratic reform of post-communist Russia carries out a continuum link between the state principle and the moral values of democratic socialism. The social-democratic alternative to the transformation of modern Russian statehood did not find an ontological embodiment during restructuring the Soviet society. The Soviet socialist model had serious internal defects in the concept of democratic socialism as a new development ideology and strategy. Their elimination and creation of models of "socialism with a human face" seemed possible through the implementation of a new imperative: "More democracy!".

The total democratization of all spheres of social administration had to destroy the command and administrative system and provide the values of democratic socialism with the universal support and significance. At that time, nobody thought that the rejection of the class substratum of statehood without its adequate replacement laid the beginning of the state's disintegration. Political democratization has acquired its own momentum and scope, and since the end of 1989, simultaneously with the formation of a multi-party system in Russia, the popularity of social-democratic values has begun to decline in the society [11].

As for the axiological measurement of state power, the declaration of the ideals of humane democratic socialism continued, but did not correspond to political practice at all. The parties emerging as the opposition to the CPSU completely denied socialism, calling for "pure" liberalism. The mass public consciousness sharply turned to the right. Ironically, even the social-democratic parties declared not the socialism, but liberalism, to be the basis of their ideologies plus a humane solution to social problems. The weakness of the supreme power in the new political conditions led to the collapse of the USSR, the collapse of the communist regime and mass "shock therapy". The chance of the evolutionary degeneration of the communist regime into social democratic has been lost. The democratic socialism turned out to be an illusion, and the freedom, equality, social justice, solidarity, democracy, in their entirety, ceased to be the defining moments in functioning of the new state power.

It seems possible to single out the main reasons for the rapid and sharp evolution of power and society from the social-democratic values to liberal ones in this tragic turn of the political history of modern Russia [12].

Firstly, the modern social-democratism is an integral part of liberalism. For the most part, the social democrats are no longer guided by a distant ideal, but recognize the socioeconomic and political system of developed capitalist countries as the most rational of all existing ones, although they favor a more social, humane development model.

It should be emphasized that the social-democracy cannot be an alternative to the socio-political system in which it has emerged and developed as part of the liberal democratic political system in terms of maintaining political equilibrium, relieving tension and optimal development of social relations.

For Russia, this circumstance of the inseparable link between the social-democracy and liberalism is of fundamental importance, since the perestroika processes corresponded to the theory option of democratic socialism developed in the West by the representatives of the social-democracy and eurocommunism, which subsequently determined the closeness of Russian social-democracy to liberalism.

The experience of Western social-democracy suggests that the emergence and normal functioning of the social-democratic parties is possible only in a country with a medium-developed market economy (at least) and an entrenched pluralistic democracy. The absence of these conditions in Russia explained the reasons for "still weak survival of the social democratic tree on Russian ground" [10]. One of the first social-democratic parties - the Social Democratic Party of Russia was guided by an attitude (B. Orlov, O. Rummyantsev), for which it seemed simpler to reform Russia in the direction of market development than to update the social-democratic ideas in its classical (Western European) version with reference to Russian reality.

In general, the use of social-democratic rhetoric, based on the priority of universal values (freedom, democracy, etc.), set a false goal for Russian society - to capitalize socialism. In this regard, the social democratism, with its part close to liberalism (freedom, democracy), was embodied in the Russian political space, and the liberal values were put in the basis of the Russian modernization project [13].

Secondly, the rapid liberalization of the Russian government was due to a very superficial understanding of the reforms it was carrying out. The socialism democratization was not planned in advance. A more significant benchmark for the Russian government was the possibility of integration into the European community, and at the domestic level - the desire to "live as in the West." The model of "socialism with a human face" was not deeply studied, and the originality of the Russian historical path was not also taken into account.

The most complex manifestation of the evolution of democratic socialism in Russia was the political opposition of equality and freedom.

There were two forms of equality in the Soviet Union: external signs (property, law, salary, etc.) and equality as the identity of individualities (image of thought, ideology, moral norms). In accordance with the Western social-democratic concept, the equality had to be transferred to the level of rights and opportunities.

If the equal rights could be written down in the Constitution, then the equal opportunities were perceived as inherent in the initially identical individuals in Russian society. Thus, little has changed in the understanding of equality as a desire for equalization. In this regard, the support by the majority of society of democratic reforms in their radical version was based on the illusion of gaining equal freedom and equal opportunities for all. The egalitarianism dominated people's minds, and they felt that everyone would become equal, gaining freedom, being in the euphoria about it. Nevertheless, freedom (external and internal) in its Western European understanding implies self-determination and thereby affirms the individual's value. The freedom can only be obtained by yourself. Equal results are not guaranteed by anyone, since it is impossible to create equal conditions, because there are no identical abilities for different people, and the personal responsibility of each for their being is the reality of a society of free individuals.

The following pattern can be traced on the example of the destruction of Soviet statehood, the fall of communist regimes in other states and their further liberal-democratic transformations. The universal and total establishment of the principle of political democracy and freedom in practice strengthens the society that has long and successfully followed the path of democratization and liberation of the individual, but at the same time politically weakens and undermines the society that has had a different political history, other traditions and enters unprepared into the democratic relations [14].

In general, we need a clear development strategy that includes an option of the optimal arrangement of the Russian state, the best governance and axiologically justified relations between the people and the government. Most researchers and modernization theorists are inclined to recognize one development scenario - liberal-democratic. However, liberalization ignored the social consequences of the market's rapid development: struggle for survival, consumer attitudes dominate the political ideas. Social instability and

uncertainty are becoming common, but the irresistible need for solidarity, the hope for social integration continue to exist. It is important on what basis such integration can be achieved. It is obvious that the economic growth and political democracy do not justify themselves as the main guidelines for development without its moral dimension [15].

Conclusions

1. The liberal-democratic transformation has led to a crisis of Russian statehood, since the institutionalization of the Western European political traditions has come into conflict with Russia's national identity. The vector of sociocultural and political transformation cannot only have a democratic orientation; the quality and nature of changes in the field of power and administration shall have a specific political, historical and cultural dimension.

2. The social-democratic alternative did not find an ontological embodiment, since the dichotomy factor of the liberal concept of freedom and equality, which has a peculiar interpretation in Russian political culture, has not been taken into account. A more meaningful and rich understanding of freedom as faith, recognition and love in relations with the authorities is a condition for self-realization and the disclosure of values of each individual, an essential sign of a strong organization.

3. It is possible to globalize the Russian social-democracy only in terms of expanding the relationships with the international social-democratic movement. Russia's social-democratic way in the globalizing world is real only if the Russian social-democrats do not adapt to changes in the world, but independently exist and create, referring to the spiritual condition of the people and its value preferences. The axiological pluralism existing in the social-democratic movement allows for a different argumentation of the values of freedom, justice, equality, democracy and solidarity, which makes the national, including Russian, specifics acceptable.

4. Russian social-democratism is ontologically approaching the Western European social-democracy. There is, indeed, a similarity. The value identity on the positions of freedom, social justice, solidarity and democracy is a modernizing model, which is actually called the "third way" [10]. The combination of moderately socialist elements in the economy and of conservative state traditionalist tendencies in politics is the essence of the project of social democratic transformation of Russian statehood.

Footnotes

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