

MODERNISATION OF THE ORIENT

Mosiakov D.V. The New and the newest history.
Modernization and globalization in Oriental societies.
M.: NOUHVPO "Institute of Oriental studies", 2016. 560 p.

The monograph of the well-known orientalist D.V. Mosiakov is devoted to the most acute research problem – modernization of the Oriental societies. The difference between the edition under review and some other publications on this subject by authoritative Russian experts (A.V. Vinogradov, A.G. Volodin, A.D. Voskresenskiy) is that modernization is being scrutinized here not only on basis of a big group of countries (from Japan to Turkey), but also from a historically comparative point of view within a period from the XIX till the XXI century, from the epoch of colonies till the modern globalization period. The author specifies four transformation spheres in Oriental countries: military, political, socially economical and socially cultural.

Modernization processes in non-western states in a specified period of history went on very painfully, arising conflicts on the choice of national development between various internal and external political forces. They came as a result of dissonance between an existential logic of the Oriental societies' development and the targets of military, political and economical expansion of the Western world. In a situation of external pressure one part of society and elite in some Oriental countries stood for a massive assimilation of the progressive foreign experience and for radical reforms, and the other one – for a prudent implementation of some elements of an alien ideology in a way, respective to the demands of Oriental societies.

The price, which had to be paid for the late implementation of the western-oriented re-

forms, was very high. Countries, civilizations and cultures, which elites were not able to foresee the new social and political challenges and continuously stood for keeping a habitual way of life, were pushed back by more dynamic competitors, who got a further development impact due to a resource potential of the traditionalists.

Oriental countries, who could not efficiently oppose the western expansion, were forced into a system of unfair economic exchange, which ended up in a new colonial system. In North-Eastern Asia only Japan managed to keep its independence and in South-Eastern Asia only Siam (now Thailand). Along with a process of the West strengthening, the Oriental states underwent intensive internal struggles for reforms, sometimes taking such dramatic shapes as the Civil war in Japan (1863-1867), the revolution in China (1911), the military takeovers in Turkey (1960, 1971, 1980, 1997), which, however, did not prevent a partial revival of traditions in a format the counter-modernization.

The monograph under review describes on its pages a few episodes of the struggle for a choice of modernization route in various Oriental countries within the last few centuries. As the author notes: "A paradox of Oriental modernization actually consists in the fact that the amount and content of reforms were more or less similar, but its implementation ways and arising consequences for destinies of the Oriental countries were absolutely different" (p.16-17).

The author breaks down the whole historical material into 4 periods: “from the first reforms till the end of the First World War”, the Inter-War period till the end of the Second World War, the second half of the XX century till the USSR disintegration, the globalization epoch. Their one by one examination finally provides us with an answer to the question “why some Oriental countries were successful in integrating the new radical changes in society, and others – not, why the reforms in some countries were long and painfully while in the other states comparatively all went fast and relatively smoothly” (p.18).

A universal modernization formula, equally efficient for various state formations, allowing for finding the most acceptable development patterns not only for a high economic growth but also for the sake of keeping the national identity, is still not found. And namely for this reason such kind of research appears very important.

A formulation of national idea in the East took place in circumstances of a hard ideological fight between homeland patriots, who perceived national interests in various ways. Within this internal fight was shaped “one of the key modernization paradoxes, when reform advocates on the one hand accepted Western know-how, but on the other hand called western countries as their main adversaries, a source of danger for national security and independence” (p.25).

This paradox stems from the fact that “almost everywhere in the East namely nationalism has become one of the main factors, mobilizing population around new authorities and their reforms” (p.25). Because of that a population was recruited to implement western reforms by the idea of the Oriental opposition to the Western aggressor. Nationalism was considered to be a reliable balance to westernization, which normally escorted modernization.

The author comes to a conclusion that “modernization...turned out to be less a substitution of the old by the new than as a synthesis

of an old and a new” (p.19). A comparison of the most efficient schemes, combining traditions and innovations, showed that “the countries with a mixed economy, who succeeded to integrate the most efficient elements of socialist and liberal models, had demonstrated... the most impressive achievements in economic and social development” (p.27).

Some analysts believed in an all-round spreading of the liberal model of economy, not taking into consideration the local traditions and peculiarities of social, political and economical development. The others thought that the future belongs to a state property on land and means of production. “A reality of the global project turned out to be absolutely different in a way that not liberal but more often authoritative regimes, headed by communist parties, in China and Vietnam for instance, demonstrate the highest economic growth nowadays” (p.507).

A reader will be definitely curious about the authors' way of thinking about the reasons for the socialist globalization project failure, those which for D.V.Mosiakov were such as limited investments and internal market as well as a competition between CPSU and CPC, burst out after N.S.Khrushchev came to power. In the meantime, many well-known and mostly successful politicians from the “Asian tigers”¹ were prominent left activists in the past and “knowledge of socialism made it possible for them to find the most efficient way of development, when a national economy develops less as a private than as a mixed one with a great share of a state-private partnership, where the state plays a main role” (p.516). This way of development proved to be efficient in the Republic of Korea, Singapore, China, India and Turkey.

After successful modernization, many Oriental countries by the beginning of XXI century managed to overcome their subordinate status, in which they stayed since the end of XIX century, and to raise their international rating. During the last decades the rapid development of a few non-western societies sufficiently changed the global balance of power. In a new situa-

¹ The four countries of Eastern Asia (Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan) are normally called in a literature as the Asian “tigers” or “dragons” of the first generation. They are followed by Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines.

tion fast growing Oriental countries had a level of involvement in the settlement of global political issues, which does not correspond to their economic potential. In a context of weakening the traditional centers of power, such an imbalance helps shaping ideological and economical preconditions for the next in turn round of fight for the existing international setup change.

The monograph explores the issue of keeping state sovereignty in a process of reforming historically developed political institutes. This agenda is highly important in the context of regionalization processes, characterizing a current period in a world political and economic development. They all at the same time may act as a globalization basis or a mechanism, opposed to enhancing influence of global institutes.

Modernization aspects, touched on in the book, do not cover the whole range of issues, which have to do with externally forced transformation of Oriental societies. As it seems, not fully reviewed are such points as the use by colonialists of the religious factor with a purpose to change the identity of these states' population and to exert influence over local elites in order to complicate the process of developing truly patriotic national-liberation movements, which arose on the basis of counter-west public sentiments.

In a separate part of the book the author made a thorough analysis of the Soviet Union disintegration influence on a of the Oriental countries modernization. Nowadays, Russia is not in the vanguard of social, political and economic institutional renovation (mainly due to a low efficiency of the state management, mainly in economy, and choice by reformers the ideologically "loaded", non-functioning schemes). Within this context it makes sense to analyze separately the successful and non-successful cases of modernization in the Oriental countries in its historical and geographical background. A shortage of reflection on real economic processes in the East weakens strategies, which the domestic reforms are based on. In this respect, some conclusions in the present monograph might be useful to consider when working out the efficient schemes of modernization in Russia.

This review contributes fundamentally to our understanding of modernization issues in Oriental countries. I am convinced that using it in education may substantially help in training not only orientalists or international relations experts but also experts in state management as well.

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