

Universality of the «Enlightenment Project» for the West and the East

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the problem of the emergence and disclosure of the potential of modern industrial society as the implementation of the European «Enlightenment project» in the XVIII-XX centuries. The main principles and stages of the formation of an integral ideological and political system, which served as the ideological basis for the emergence of a model of modern industrial society in Western European countries, and in the future – the spread of this model around the world as a normative one, are shown. At the same time, by the end of the 20th century, the universality of the “Enlightenment project” gradually raised doubts in non-Western societies that did not experience the fundamental upheavals of the Reformation and bourgeois revolutions, but remained faithful to the original foundations of their civilizations. In turn, in the Western «core» of modern society, the potential of the «Enlightenment project» was completed, during which its ideals came into conflict with its principles. In the 21st century, the development of a new project that meets the conditions of the technological revolution and the features of a multipolar world system becomes an urgent task.

Keywords: Enlightenment project, West, East, modern society, modernization, ideals, values, principles

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Introduction

The turn of the century was for the world community the beginning of the transition to a new situation in economic and social life. The main trend of world development in the context of globalization has been the strengthening of the role of the East, the entire Eastern world as whole and individual giant countries, the strengthening of their significance and independent role at the economic and political level.

Meanwhile, earlier the West was at the forefront of globalization and became its main beneficiary, proposed or imposed on the world several centuries ago its development project. Therefore, when the accumulated contradictions provoked a global crisis of

the world system in the first decades of the 21st century, this led not only to an increase in contradictions between the West and non-West, but also to the completion of the development of a bourgeois industrial society according to the European model – what can be called the “Enlightenment project”.

Western historians, sociologists and economists seemed to have their eyes opened; one after another they stated the completion of the centuries – previous development of the West according to this project. For example, N.Fergusson wrote: “Yes, probably, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, I clearly understood: Western power, which lasted 500 years, has come to an end” (29:9).

Obviously, the completion of the “Enlightenment project” is a challenge for the West, which is forced to develop a new development project that meets the conditions of the Fourth technological revolution and the socio-political system that has developed in Western countries. This is no less important for the countries of the East, which have completed, with varying degrees of success, the process of catching-up modernization according to the Western model and are faced with the need to determine the prospects for their development and the degree of participation of the West in it.

The belief remains that the Enlightenment project was universal and there could be no other way of development for the world. But was it?

The question of why the West rules has occupied European and Eastern thinkers for more than two centuries, since the beginning of the 19th century, when its leading role in world development was determined. In search of an answer to this question, according to I. Morris, “an overwhelming number of assumptions and theories were created” (23:19): from the assumption of simple luck (accident) to statements about the decisive role of the geographical factor or European culture (predetermination) (23:17–42). The dominance of Eurocentrism led to the conviction that the East was doomed to the role of a slave, that it had no choice for the future either. In politics, the dominance of the neo-liberal idea was established, formulated by M. Thatcher as TINA (from the English: There Is No Alternative), supported by the theory of the “end of history” by F.Fukuyama, and poetically expressed by H.Belloc in 1898 (23:18):

Everything will be as we want.
In case of various troubles
We have a machine gun «Maxim»,
They don't have a «Maxim».

Indeed, the development of the countries of the West and the countries of the East that followed them in the course of catching-up modernization was based on the European model. This model was formed in the XVIII-XIX centuries as an industrial, capitalist, democratic, enlightened society. The origins of this model lie not only in the consistent development of productive forces and economic relations, determined by the specific

conditions of the countries of Western Europe (these processes were in the East as well), but also in an integral system of ideas that captured several countries (this is the “core” of Western Europe). Collectively, they were called the “Enlightenment Project”. The project was successfully implemented in the West by the middle of the 20th century, and later, in the era of globalization, it not without reason was claimed to be universal.

Although it would be strange to ignore the high efficiency of the European “Enlightenment project”, in the parameters of which we all still live, it would be strange to reduce the history of the world only to the history of the West.

Materials and methods

The main attention is paid not only to the economic, but also to the ideological and spiritual components of the project. The integrity and novelty of the social system that arose on the basis of the project was given by a set of ideas, among which the principle of unlimited faith in the human mind dominated, which opened up the possibility of rebuilding society on rational grounds, and the no less important principle of absolutisation of private interest and private property, which opened up unprecedented opportunities for unlocking the potential of an individual in free competition.

In this article, the author sought to identify such an aspect of the problem: how and why the “Enlightenment project” could not be fully implemented in non-Western, Eastern societies, not only in the economic sphere, but also in the non-material sphere, the active expansion of Western culture did not lead to the establishment of its dominance in Eastern societies. An important question is why in the East there was no alternative to the European project (which, according to formal indicators, was possible). These issues are relevant, since the crisis of transition has gripped Western society, and in the already modernized countries of the East, there is a rethinking of the Western model of development, previously implemented as a normative one.

The study involved both philosophical and historical works of different eras of the Western and Eastern worlds, which made it possible to consider the role of the European “Enlightenment project” from different points of view. The author used the basic methodological principles and methods of historical science, among the most effective and promising are the systematic method, the method of historical perspective, and the comparative method.

Results

The concept of “Enlightenment project” is more suitable for understanding the past centuries than the concepts of “modern society”, “industrial society”, “modern era”, “European civilization” or “capitalist formation”, since it allows a comprehensive consideration of economic and non-economic factors of development of countries in

their unity, in historical interdependence, including after the end of the European Age of Enlightenment, allows us to comprehend the entire “Enlightenment project” on a global scale.

In this case, the concept of “project” is an idea extended in time and space, developed at the level of ideas, a plan of social organization. The prerequisites for the formation of the foundations of modern society (economic, technical, social) arose in different parts of the world, but only in Western Europe (due to geographical and political factors) in the 18th-19th centuries did they form an integral system that was comprehended and accepted by the European elite in as a guiding idea. Within the framework of the project, a model of a modern society was formed, the implementation of which in the countries of Europe (and then the world) led to the emergence of regional, subregional and country models with their own characteristics in economic, social, political, cultural and spiritual life, which nevertheless did not cancel their common root.

It is worth clarifying that the concepts of “West” and “East” are not just geographical concepts (synonymous with the concepts of Europe and Asia), but also the designation of various civilizations, large ethno-national and socio-cultural communities inhabiting a certain territory and possessing special features that are timeless culture, worldview and national psychology. At the same time, in the formational socio-economic understanding, “the elements of similarity between the West and the East far outweigh the differences that took place until the 19th century,” stated I. Morris (24:25). Later, in the course of the catching-up modernization of the East, formational differences significantly weakened, although they did not disappear at all.

Why Europe?

Why did Europe turn out to be a generator of development, and why did the European project form the basis for the subsequent development of the world on a global scale? Is it predestination or coincidence? These questions still occupy many researchers: economists, historians, anthropologists.

In the Middle Ages, different models of the development of the social system arose: the Byzantine Empire, the Chinese Empire, the Arab Caliphate, in the 20th century – the USSR, the Soviet project. They were based on various civilizational pillars, but were equally successful variants (models) of socio-economic, political, cultural and spiritual development. And yet they failed to become leaders, the “keys to the future” were in other hands.

In the Byzantine Empire, which abandoned the ideological heritage of the Roman Empire in the 4th century,

the state ideal consisted in respect for the earthly order, fixed by God in His book – the Bible ... – A.Guillou pointed out. – Byzantine culture diligently preserved the values of the past and was cautious about the present... The Byzantines sought to preserve and pass on to their descendants the inviolability of their traditions, based on homogeneity, on the combination of secular and religious life. This can explain the lack of inventiveness and improvement of the means of

production” and the fact that “the structure of the Byzantine economy failed to adapt to the policy of expansion... (9:392–394).

If the ideal of the Roman Empire was the Power of the State, before which everyone bowed, then in Byzantium, the Church, which determined the Orthodox unity of the state and subjects, formulated a different state ideal: “piety is higher than well-being (*italics* is our – the author)” (9:394). The Byzantine Empire collapsed in 1453, but the Chinese Empire was rising on the other side of the earth.

In the turbulent internal political life in China, the ideals of virtuous government and respect for traditions were not questioned. At the beginning of the 16th century, Ming China asserted itself as “the true center of world civilization”, and the surrounding world was viewed as “a barbarian periphery with which only vassal relations are possible” (2:257). For a millennium, the character of Chinese civilization was determined by the fidelity to the wisdom of the ancients, who knew the “will of Heaven”. At the same time, since 1405, the seven famous sea expeditions of Zheng He to the states of Southeast Asia, to the shores of India, Ceylon, the Persian Gulf and the eastern coast of Africa (which Europe was not capable of at that time) became an indicator of China’s economic power. The rise of a new world center was interrupted by the Manchu invasion and exacerbated by a deep internal crisis that led to the fall of the Ming dynasty. The population explosion and socio-economic rise that followed in the 17th and 18th centuries were already limited to the borders of the empire. The dynastic crisis, combined with the intensification of state exploitation of the Chinese countryside, led to an increase in social tension in society, which was taken advantage of by external forces – European countries. All this stopped the further disclosure of the potential of Chinese society.

The Arab caliphate in the 8th-12th centuries also claimed the universality of its project in terms of political, military, economic, religious and cultural indicators. A huge state arose, stretching from the Pyrenees in the west to the Indus in the east, in this geopolitical space for the first time since the time of Alexander the Great, East and West, the heritage of European Antiquity and the ancient cultures of the East, united. In this space, connected in addition to the political power of the caliph by one dominant language and one dominant religion, Arabic science, culture and economy, actively borrowed by Europeans, rapidly developed. However, the weakness of economic and political ties between various parts of the vast caliphate, the constant rivalry of various groups and clans within the ruling elite held back the development of the caliphate and led to its collapse. In turn, the Islamic worldview, based on the inviolability of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, formed a passive worldview. The abundance of natural resources also encouraged contentment with the existing order. Ultimately, the Caliphate split into pieces and fell, giving way to the Ottoman Empire, which no longer claimed its own geopolitical development project.

Europe, by virtue of its youth as a geopolitical entity, unlike the “tired” empires, possessed the historical energy of the “barbarians” who came to the ruins of the Western Roman Empire. In the Renaissance in the XIV-XVI centuries, they again turned to the ideas of antiquity, but not to the greatness of Rome – the state, but to the achievements of the

culture of Rome and Greece: the importance of a free person and free thinking increases; the individual comes out of “medieval anonymity” and is freed from “social restrictions”. Moreover, “religious medieval thought is questioned, there is a demographic rise, technical achievements, sea travel develops, a new aesthetic appears, Christianity is rethought and rejuvenated” (13:10, 13).

Being formally a weak element of the world system, an outsider in terms of economic and social indicators, Europe sought to strengthen itself, and since it had fewer resources than the centers of the then world, the way out was guessed in the transition to intensive methods of development. The outsider is looking for opportunities to make a breakthrough and sometimes finds it. Social systems in the East were closed and striving for sustainable peace, the emerging European system immediately opened itself to the world and launched a process of continuous and irreversible change. Everything began to move, and the new system, step by step, went beyond its geographical boundaries, offering or imposing its development model on everyone. According to A.M.Petrova, “a comparative analysis of the economic past of these two macrocivilizations” allows us to say that Western Europe

by the beginning of the 19th century managed only to catch up with Asia and only slightly overtake it in terms of GNP per capita. Another question is that this was done in an extremely short historical period – in just a few centuries (34:79).

This happened due to the fact that a successful combination of objective circumstances has developed on the European continent: geographical, demographic, political and economic. F. Braudel emphasizes the importance of meat nutrition based on animal proteins and animal draft power, which led to an increase in the population and life expectancy of a working person, and also qualitatively increased the efficiency of agriculture (3). The heterogeneous community of European states was able to respond more flexibly to external and internal threats than the centralized eastern empires. But Europe was able to show its potential thanks to the use of a certain system of ideas, in which the heritage of Antiquity, the borrowed achievements of Eastern cultures, the bold acquisition of secular thought in the Renaissance and the revolutionary break with tradition in the Reformation were closely intertwined.

Answering the question “why?” J. Goldstone first of all noted that “Europe owes its success not to its traditional culture, not to its geography, not to its form of government, or even to its technological development before 1700. In fact, I believe, even in 1750 Western Europe was no different from the rest of the world, including Russia and China, the Ottoman and other empires. They were all largely agrarian states ruled by hereditary monarchs who claimed ever more absolute power over their subjects. J. Goldstone saw the secret of Europe’s success in the established dominance of a secular worldview, “the triumph of skepticism and freethinking”, as well as “undermining the absolute authority” of political and religious leaders, that is, the Church (11:13).

The onset of the “Age of Reason”, the era of faith in human capabilities to transform the world for the sake of “progress” became the ideological prerequisite for economic and

political revolution. Changes in self-awareness, worldview and outlook, going on in Western European society decade after decade, have changed people's attitudes and the nature of society itself. Man was and remains both the object and the subject of the historical process. A new level of consciousness and conditions for unlocking the potential of people created new opportunities. Of course, it was not the Europe of thinkers and poets that gained power, but the Europe of merchants, entrepreneurs and bankers.

I. Morris argued with this approach, without denying the importance of the above arguments, reasonably pointing out the importance of the geographical factor that allowed Europe, in conditions of equilibrium with the East in 1500–1700, to strengthen due to Atlantic trade, which qualitatively increased the resources of the “core” of the European economy and activated European business and finance. Another, equally important advantage of the West, acquired by it already in the 18th century, is a new source of energy, coal, which discovered the power of steam. The “accumulation of technology” that was absent in the East was supported by the spread of literacy among a growing population. According to I. Morris, “somewhere between 1750 and 1800” “the level of development of the West caught up with the level of development of the East, putting an end to the era of the East that lasted twelve centuries” (24:433).

Of course, there can be no simple answer to a complex question. The new state of Western society arises as a result of a combination of objective and subjective conditions in the economic and non- economic spheres of life.

Irreversible change in people's lives

The ideology of the “Enlightenment project” is, first of all, the rejection of the entire previous social system of the Middle Ages, which changed the usual order in the economy, spiritual, social, political and cultural life of European society. In other words, this is an all-encompassing project that totally changes society and offers a person existence in the parameters of a new life, a new system of values, norms of behavior and morality, in new economic conditions of management and new social relations. At the same time, the rejection of the previous heritage did not mean a break with it: society, like a living organism, was transformed from one state to another, links with the previous state.

These changes did not occur, of course, all at once, but gradually: in economic life (the appearance of manufactories and a new source of energy, the expansion of the use of technical inventions, the activation and expansion of trade relations, the emergence of financial institutions), in social life (the change from the rule of the nobility to the rule of the bourgeoisie), public life (national states with centralized power are being established, the idea of an enlightened monarch serving the “common good” arises), cultural life (desacralization of knowledge, the emergence of printing, the expansion of the space of education, the emergence of new forms of communication between people, the intensive circulation of new ideas), everyday life (new amenities and norms of life appear), spiritual life (the Catholic Church is losing its absolute authority, faith becomes a personal matter of

a person), international life (the norms and rules of the Westphalian system of international relations are being approved, there is a wide expansion of European states in Asia and Africa, the colonial system of the West is being created on three continents), there are spheres of political and legal life, separated from power (culture, institutions and norms of political and legal life are being formed).

The project arose in a certain social environment and changed this environment, but the environment also influenced the project (for example, the “Faust project” that arose in the 18th century evolved into the “accountant project” by the beginning of the 21st century).

The changes affected a small part of European society, 5-10-15%. Nevertheless, it was this minority that became the vanguard of socio-economic development and gradually, decade after decade, drew ever wider sections of the population into its sphere of influence.

P.Shonyu calls the irreversibility of the changes that have begun as an important feature of the Enlightenment: “The originality of the 18th century lies not in individual modifications, but in the fact that it was at this time that changes acquired the ability to lead other changes”, which allows us to talk not about addition, but the multiplication of change. P. Shonyu uses the concept of “growth factor of the Enlightenment”, the manifestation of which entailed “continuous growth” in the 19th century, and “explosive changes” in the 20th century (33:28, 34). Later, M. Spence developed the thesis about the world, parts of which live “at different speeds”.

The emergence of new ideas was supported by economic factors.

In economic life, during the industrial revolution, the importance of industry, replacing handicraft production, sharply increases, national markets arise, and cities begin to grow as industrial, commercial and public centers of life. The “coal revolution” and technical inventions allow mass creation of new products and increase labor productivity; a less labor-intensive and more energy-intensive economy emerges.

The sharp expansion of transatlantic trade and the growth of the influx of resources from the colonies, along with a large amount of energy used, accelerated the development of Western European countries, which made a qualitative breakthrough from a low level of socio-economic position. The well-being of people was increasing, their access to food distribution systems was being facilitated, and the level of consumption and the quality of life were increasing.

The great bourgeois revolutions in Great Britain and France established new norms of social and political life: new principles of democracy and the rule of law, new structures of political and judicial power, and in the sphere of spiritual life – the principles of humanism and “Christian secularism”, anti-clericalism and steadily growing atheism. The cult of freedom and reason replaced the cult of God. An important part of the social change was the institutional change in the life of the European countryside and the European city, generated both by lofty ideals and practical considerations of a growing layer of entrepreneurs and merchants.

On the whole, the achievements of the internal development of European countries and their external expansion established the West as a leader in world development, and its

successful development model (despite its uniqueness) as a normative one, which sooner or later all non-Western societies were forced to recognize.

European universalism of the “Enlightenment Project”

The “Enlightenment Project” arose and began to be implemented in Western Europe, turning this small tip of the Eurasian continent into the core of a new society of modern times. Already in the 18th century, the space of the Enlightenment, and later on, even more so – the “Enlightenment Project”, noticeably went beyond the geographical boundaries of greater Europe. First, North America, as an overseas Anglo-French addition to Europe, and later the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East turned into a space in which the ideas of the “Enlightenment project”, which became Euro-American, were realized, albeit to varying degrees and in different ways. At the same time, the humanism of the Enlightenment had certain limits and was hardly noticeable outside the European continent: Europeans arrogantly ignored other civilizations and other cultures, declared themselves “masters of the world”. At first, little attention was paid to this in the non-Western world, and then it turned out to be impossible to dispute. It was the established economic and military-political domination of the West (Eurocentrism in the broad sense of the term), personified by the dollar and the Colt revolver (“Maxim” machine gun), that allowed the countries of Western European (Euro-American) culture to gain a leadership position in world development, to offer or impose on the rest of the world their vision of world economy and international relations.

The world was offered a new system of values, which included not only universal values (the concepts of good and evil, justice and injustice), but also the values of European Christian civilization (the ten commandments, evangelical ideals and moral norms), as well as the values of the Enlightenment (human freedom, progress, humanism, democracy).

Value is a social definition of objects and phenomena of the surrounding world, revealing their positive or negative value for a person and society in an ideal and concrete form. Values are considered by society as stable, meaningful and normative. On the basis of values, a system of ideals is formed – goals that the individual and society should struggle for.

Along with secular humanism, rationalism, progress, and pragmatism became the new values of the coming “Age of Reason”. The system evolved and new values emerged. K.Dawson wrote:

During the last part of the 19th century, the spirit of Western culture changed, and it was already an era of materialism, both in thought and in action. The new biological theories of evolution and natural selection were crudely interpreted in such a way as to justify the struggle for existence between states and classes and the survival of the «fittest» or most prosperous (14:314).

Theories of “reasonable egoism” and “struggle for existence” appeared, justifying the justice of the rule of the strong and destroying the former organic harmony of Western European society (6).

At the same time, the principles of “right of force” and “competition” existed in public and international life along with the weaker principles of “equality” and “humanism”.

Intellectuals in the countries of the “first echelon of capitalist development” and the “second echelon” argued about the significance of the project, sometimes questioning it. Attention to the concepts of civilization, cultural-historical types and culture in the context of capitalist development in the works of N.Danilevsky, O.Spengler, F.Braudel and other thinkers testifies to the awareness of the importance of non-material aspects of development. And the belated discovery of the vastness of the civilizational heritage of Eastern societies could cast doubt on the universal significance of Western civilization, the normativity of the Western model and the universality of the Western project, but it did not.

Over the controversy and disputes of intellectuals in European and Eastern capitals, the economic development of the industrial formation from the 19th century asserted its dominance and inclusiveness, the beginning of a new global cycle of socio-economic and political development, the alternative to which was not visible. Indeed, in itself, the successful development of the agrarian and handicraft economy, for example, in China, ultimately did not lead to expanded economic growth, and therefore forced non-Western countries to accept sooner or later the intensive type of development of the Western model.

Self-negation of the “Enlightenment project” in the West

The “Enlightenment Project” was implemented in Western Europe and North America by the middle of the 20th century. Thanks to this, the countries of European culture managed to realise remarkable achievements in their socio-economic development.

True, the discrepancy between high educational ideals and the real capitalist system caused disappointment and resistance among the masses, conflicts and crises periodically arose. In economic life, free market competition also gave rise to negative phenomena and crises of a cyclical nature. However, these processes were overlapped by the positive features of this model for an ever wider segment of the population.

In the second half of the 20th century, crisis phenomena in Western countries acquired a systemic character. Crises were not limited to the sphere of economy or politics, they captured the spheres of culture and spiritual life, a striking example was the 1968 revolution (4; 6). For two and a half centuries, the ideas of the great Enlighteners have become vulgarized and simplified, and the principle of liberalism, devoid of the restraining framework of Christian values, has turned into a neoliberal principle of permissiveness.

Nevertheless, the inertia of the development of engineering and technology, along with the purposeful economic policy of the leading Western states, made it possible to extend the existence of the capitalist, bourgeois system within the existing system for another half a century.

The economic implementation of the “Enlightenment project” was based on the achievements of the industrial and scientific and technological revolutions, which created new productive forces (new industry, new energy) and global systems for the supply of raw materials and goods. Innovation spurred development, development increased savings, the

population and life expectancy of people grew, and their quality of life improved. At the turn of the 20th–21st centuries, the technological revolution complicated the structure of productive forces due to digitalization, the Internet, robotics, nanotechnologies, etc. The era of industrial development is over. The question is: did it increase the volume of the Good for people, what the great figures of the Enlightenment aspired?

The question is rhetorical. Emmanuel Todd wrote in 2017:

Free trade and free movement of capital, on the one hand, make it possible to increase the rate of profit, but on the other hand, they lead to a decrease in incomes of citizens, an increase in inequality, a global drop in demand, and as a result of the unbridled pursuit of profit, they cause more and more new economic crises. The development of technology brought to the man of the most advanced world not freedom, but oppression. The fear of unemployment, together with a decline in the standard of living, resulting in a reduction in its duration, led to the fact that modernity began to resemble an escape in the opposite direction from civilization – into slavery. And such a rollback over the course of just one generation is shocking to any person who has known the dreams of freedom that blossomed in the 1960s” (29:8).

The events of recent years, and especially the Covid pandemic, show the paradoxical result of the “Enlightenment project”: in the non-material sphere, partly in the economic one, it turned into its own nihilistic self-denial.

At first glance, this is understandable in technology and economics, where, based on the principle of progress, the new principles denies and replaces the old. But if earlier the sphere of economic life developed to meet the needs of a person – always limited for natural reasons, now new models of products and norms of behavior are imposed on a human consumer based on human desires which are always unlimited and generated by advertising.

In the non-material sphere, the system of values and norms of behavior that underlay the “Enlightenment project” are rejected. The values of democracy (an independent point of view and political activity) are devalued in the era of “liberal democracy” and replaced by conformism, the principle of “managed democracy” in the conditions of manipulating people’s minds through «communication wars» in the information space. The state has lost the function of an integrator of society, which is in a state of fragmentation and atomization. There has been a transition from the state and society limiting the power of violence to the recognition of the legitimacy of violence in the intellectual sphere (the dictate of the point of view of power in the media or minorities in public life). So democracy imperceptibly gives way to oligarchy and ochlocracy.

The experience of scientific research of physicians who offered vaccination during the “Covid” period is rejected by an allegedly enlightened society in the countries of European culture. Education is rapidly losing its necessity and value, giving way to information from a variety of sources. There is a prospect of a “new illiteracy” of the medieval type, when human knowledge is limited to a set of applied skills and abilities.

The polarization of Western society according to material, intellectual and cultural criteria again leads to social stratification according to medieval norms: the first estate is a

narrow layer of the ruling elite, combining power and property, the second estate is a group of specialists serving the needs of the elite, and the third estate is hired workers in the broadest sense of the term and the self-employed. Social mobility is increasingly difficult. Each of the estates has a different level of rights and opportunities, has its own level of economic consumption, knowledge and skills.

The consistent and logical development of the ideological basis of the “Enlightenment project” led to a complete rejection of the system of Christian values and a rethinking of universal values, affirming instead the values of a neoliberal society. Some “universal values” and “rational morality” are proposed, based on the principles of liberalism and the achievements of biotechnology (the creation of a “new human nature”), as opposed to the religions that come to life in the 21st century, national and ethnic values of different civilizations. On the other hand, superstition and pagan cults are being revived in a modernized form.

The norms of morality, which consider labor as a necessary and self-sufficient value, have been replaced by the norms of the optionality of labor, and entertainment, which was previously considered an acceptable recreation, is gradually turning into the main pastime and goal of human life. Comfort and consumption (shopping) have become the goal of existence.

The value of the family and family relations, moral norms, respect for elders and respect for authorities turn out to be outdated and unnecessary. The values of all-encompassing tolerance are being absolutized, examples of which are attempts to abandon the concepts of “male” and “female”, the disappearance of masculinity as a positive ideal.

The results of the centuries-old culture of the West in literature, fine arts and music are equated with handicrafts of profane mass culture. The “Gutenberg era” is over, and the book has become just one (and not the most important) of the media. The historical memory of society disappears, and with it “the connection of times breaks up”.

True, in spite of this, the man of the West “sacredly believes in the progressiveness of his modern society” (29:29). And this gives him confidence that, for example, the bombing of countries in the Middle East with drones will ultimately lead to the emancipation of local women and the development of democratic relations.

But everything that had a beginning has its end.

John Gray in a book with the eloquent title “Wake for Enlightenment” writes:

We cannot even rule out the possibility that the Western tradition is not amenable to renewal, and its continued existence is a danger to other cultural foundations that can still be fruitful” (12:347).

His pessimism we see here: “The disintegration of the old moral forms and pre-existing religions with their humanistic and universalist pretensions, following the Enlightenment, may be a prelude to the irreversible – and probably not much to be regretted – decline of the West. Western cultures may not be able to absorb the changes in

traditional conceptions of ethics and science, in theoretical thought in general, following the rejection of the axial Western tradition, whose culmination is the Enlightenment, and the result is nihilism” (12, pp. 347-348). Nevertheless, the author also sees a light in the gloomy future, believing that “any opportunities for the healing of culture from the nihilism generated by the Enlightenment may be associated with non-Western peoples, whose task then will be in part to protect themselves from the wreckage of the Western shipwreck” (12:349).

True, there is also an opposite point of view. S. Pinker expressed it best of all in the book *Enlightenment Continues*. In defense of reason, science, humanism and progress (2018). The author condemns “progressophobia” and categorically rejects the “bleak assessment of the state of affairs in the world”, which is “hopelessly erroneous, like the theory of a flat earth, and completely untrue” (25:13). In confirmation, he cites dozens of graphs, in which, using a large statistical economic of the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, he shows a steady and qualitative improvement in human living conditions: an increase in life expectancy, a decrease in infant mortality, an increase in the average energy value of the daily diet, a reduction in the share of the poor, reduction in the working week, the growth of literacy in the world, the reduction of violence against children and sexual discrimination, the growth of domestic amenities, and finally, the growth of well-being, etc. These data are irrefutable, but no one is going to deny them. There is no need to defend the mind against perfectly reasonable contemporaries.

The fact is that S. Pinker and optimists like him evaluate the implementation of the “Enlightenment project” based on the goals set three centuries ago. Basically, these goals have been achieved, the project has been implemented.

But over the centuries, life has changed qualitatively. New goals arose, new problems, conflicts appeared, and not in economic life, which the “Fathers of the Enlightenment” could not have even imagined.

Based on the fact that a person is both a subject and an object of social life, one must take into account his worldview and worldview, on the basis of which he acts. That is why the spiritual component of any activity is so important, that specific system of norms, values and meanings that either separates one civilization from another, or brings them closer to each other.

In the 18th century, a unique combination of material, political, cultural and spiritual factors brought to life the “Enlightenment Project”. But all these factors have changed over the centuries and the change of dozens of generations of people, and the attitude towards them has also changed.

W. Sombart in his work “*Bourgeois. Sketches on the history of the spiritual development of modern economic man*” (1913) wrote that in order to understand the nature of the development of the capitalist spirit, it is necessary to investigate, first of all,

what is the ideal, what are the central life values that modern economic man is guided by. But here we immediately stumble upon a terrible shift in a person’s attitude to personal values in a narrower sense, a shift that, it seems to me, has become decisive for the rest of the structure of

life. I mean the fact that the living person, with his happiness and sorrow, with his needs and demands, has been pushed out of the center of the circle of interests and two abstractions have taken his place: profit and business. Man, therefore, ceased to be what he remained until the end of the early capitalist era – the measure of all things (15:169).

A hundred years after the publication of W. Sombart's book, the primacy of human interests over ideals has become the norm, and such a hierarchy is the basis of the value system of modern society.

All this allows us to talk about the crisis of the system – the crisis of the civilizational foundations of society and the exhaustion of the creative principle of the “Enlightenment project”.

The entire process of implementing the “Enlightenment project”, that very “ascent of the West”, took place in the West not only at the expense of its own resources and capabilities, but also to a large extent due to the exploitation of the natural and human resources of the non-West. This determined the absolute leadership of the West for 500 years.

Nevertheless, according to E. Todd, not in China or Brazil, but “it is in the USA, Europe and Japan that the rules of the game of economic globalization are determined”. And it is this triad that, starting in the 1980s, has engaged the active population of the third world, who has recently mastered literacy, thereby “jeopardizing the development of third world countries, depriving them of specialists and destroying the local middle class”. At the same time, he continues, “Russia, the old European power, the only country that retains independence from the system of globalization, managed to hold on to its positions” (29:12), in other words, to stay on the “edge of a cliff” of the “Enlightenment project”.

Where has the catch-up modernization led the East?

The implementation of the “Enlightenment project” showed the enormous potential of the new formation, which is opening up in the European countries of the “first” and “second” echelons of capitalist development.

The Western project was challenged not by huge China or the fragmented Arab world, but by small island Japan, which defeated a strong European power in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. At the same time, the possibility of such a challenge has arisen in a country that has achieved great success in carrying out catch-up modernization according to the Western model. And in the future, this eastern country adopted the norms and values of the European “Enlightenment project” (consistently combining them in symbiosis with the original Japanese ones), unlike the vast majority of the countries of the East.

The desire of domestic orientalists to gain a new view on the modern development of the countries of the East was manifested in a large number of works and is concentratedly expressed in the collective work “Concepts of Modern Oriental Studies” (2013). The countries

of the East are currently experiencing crisis processes, but the crises are of a different and not of a systemic nature.

The fact is that the catch-up modernization in the countries of the East took place mainly in the socio-economic (formational) sphere and only indirectly influenced the civilizational basis. Faith and culture in special ethno-national incarnations over the centuries have shaped such a worldview and worldview of Eastern societies, which could not even be replaced by a Western one even in decades of modernization (as happened in the economic life of the countries of the East).

The “Enlightenment Project” turned out to be alien to non-Western countries, although in terms of their economic and cultural development before the start of the industrial revolution and transatlantic trade, they were not inferior, but in some ways even surpassed the countries of the West. In their contacts with the East, the Europeans became stronger in the idea of their own superiority (“civilization”) over the rest of the world. Scientists of the East have written a lot about the falsity of the universalization of the “Enlightenment project”, it is enough to name the book “Orientalism. Western Concepts of the East” by Edward Said (28), published in 1978, and “Provincializing Europe” in 1999 by Dipesh Chakrabarti (31).

Meanwhile, in the regions of the Middle East, South and East Asia, the money economy and maritime trade successfully developed, the level of handicraft labor increased, manufactories appeared, and all this was supported by a powerful demographic factor – a growing population, as well as huge natural resources and the inseparability of the link between power and property. The economic model of reproduction and the principle of extensive development dominated there, while the principle of intensive economic development was already established in the West.

In the East, there were no backbone foundations of the “Enlightenment project”: Christianity in the integrity of its institutions and doctrinal doctrines; the Renaissance with the approval of an anthropocentric approach to life; the era of the Reformation, which changed the hierarchy of spiritual and economic values; the era of bourgeois revolutions, which approved the principles of democracy and atheism in spiritual life, and in public life – the principles of activism, pragmatism and egoism.

In the countries of the East, in contrast to the West, the changes that took place did not radically affect the non-material spheres of society (social structure, state, education), did not weaken and, moreover, did not destroy traditional values and norms of life, did not change people’s worldview so dramatically. There, the grounds for fighting the theocracy or asserting the principles of “reasonable faith”, religious tolerance and freedom of conscience or national religion turned out to be much weaker. Individualism could not supplant the values of the communal principle and family patriarchy. The spiritual and philosophical searches of people did not go beyond the traditional paradigm of spiritual salvation as the goal of life, while in the West the goal of life was transferred from the inner world to the outside, the goal was the free development of the human personality, not constrained by anything in its economic and intellectual activity, apart from law and order. The East was offered a universalistic and secular image of man.

Nevertheless, the myth of independence, national liberation and sovereignty arose there, which belonged to the spheres of politics and international life. Non-Western societies used the Western model of industrial society to make a breakthrough from backwardness and underdevelopment. True, this model was turned “upside down”: instead of society, the state became the main subject of development. And people expected to ensure their freedom and protection of rights from the state, and not from themselves.

And there (as a prerequisite, and then part of the process of modernization) at the end of the 19th century, the phenomenon of “enlightenment” arose as a tool to overcome social inertia and backwardness, including criticism of the negative aspects of public life and demands for the development of European-type education, freedom of speech and the press.

At the same time, arrogant Eurocentrism was rejected. In the second half of the 19th century, the struggle for national liberation intensified in South Asia and the Middle East, during which the Eastern leaders believed it possible to use borrowed European norms, values, institutions and structures for building statehood on the basis of the “Enlightenment project”. But in the twentieth century, the countries of the East did not want to remain in the “waiting room”, literally following step by step along the path of European Modernity. For example, in India, after achieving national independence, they rejected Mill’s “classical position” that “universal education must precede universal suffrage” and decided on universal suffrage despite the fact that the bulk of the country’s population remained illiterate.

In the course of the catch-up modernization that unfolded at the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, the countries of the East were forced to make a leap in their development in order to overcome backwardness, poverty and underdevelopment. The consistent formation of a capitalist economy in a democratic way from below turned out to be impossible for them both due to the lack of internal sources of development and the presence in their economies of a powerful external factor – colonial and semi-colonial powers and Western capital, which had their own interests. The weakness or absence of national capital forced the state to play a leading and active role in economic life; therefore the development of the capitalist economy and market relations was not accompanied by an adequate development of democratic principles in political life, as happened in the original “project”. It was necessary to look for other sources of growth and development – all this destroyed such an attractive Western model of the industrial economy, the dominance of market relations. This also entailed the rejection of the path of the Western economy: from growth to development based on the industrial revolution and growth at a new level to meet the needs of the population; development based on the scientific and technological revolution and the transition to new growth; development based on the technological revolution to meet the desires of the population. For the countries of the East, the main task was and remains precisely economic growth – to meet the needs of the population.

Thus, the Western model was partially implemented, and by the end of the 20th century, the model of reproduction of the “two-track economy” and “two-track social

development” and the development of enlightenment was becoming widespread in the East and determined the direction and nature of its future development.

The East choosing the path of development

Doubts about the universality of the “Enlightenment project” and the normativity of the Western model of modern society arose in the countries of the East by the end of the 20th century after the first decades of socio-economic modernization. When “people were satisfied”, they asked themselves questions “how to live?” and “what to live for?”, although the values of economic growth and economic wealth have retained their significance. But their importance has declined compared to the traditional values of justice, tolerance, helping other people and others pushed aside by modernization.

During the period of modernization, the relationship between European and Eastern principles in the sphere of culture proceeded in the form of symbiosis, less often – synthesis. For example,

traditional needs, principles, norms, values inherent in pre-bourgeois societies are superimposed on the elements of the bourgeoisization of culture. There is a bizarre, sometimes grotesque, but usually viable and sustainable interweaving of new and old (34:476).

In the countries of the East, the attitude towards the European project as an alternative to the traditional way of life – not to a model of socio-economic development – was ambivalent, according to the principle of “attraction and repulsion”.

There is some double irony in the fact that colonialism first tears us away from our past, and then forces us to turn to the colonialists for information about this very past, argued the Europeanized Egyptian Nadia Wassef, Europeans invented Egyptology, and then began to teach it to the Egyptians”. French archaeologists created the Egyptian Antiquities Service in the middle of the 19th century, but a century later it came under the control of the Egyptians (7:54).

Comprehension of one’s own culture became possible only through the mediation of European, Western culture. So, you could see many monuments of Ancient Egypt in the museums of London, Paris and Berlin.

The same author notes the stagnant nature of Egypt’s development before the impact of an external factor – the West: “We became victims of our own pyramidal scheme: we console ourselves with the idea that we built the pyramids, and do not notice how our houses are crumbling around ...” (7:57). An effective response to the stagnation was the catching up modernization of Egypt in the middle of the 20th century, and then of other Arab countries that followed the successful Western model of an industrial society. Nowadays, in the sphere of culture, the rejection of Western principles is increasingly common, the attractiveness of tradition – religious, national, everyday – is growing. In the documents of the XVII Congress of the CPC (2007), the use of the ideas

of Confucius to build the theoretical system of Chinese socialism has already become noticeable: the concept of “social harmony”, which is based on the value orientations of early Confucianism, is declared an essential attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is recognized that the main ideas of Confucius “are taken into account in the formation of the country’s internal political course”, the organic combination of “the principles of a market economy and the regulatory role of Confucian culture”, the assertion of “priority of the spiritual over the material”, raising the level of civil morality and patriotism, for “harmonious coexistence of various strata of society” (2:9).

Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, which by the beginning of the 21st century had achieved great success in realizing the economic parameters of the Western model of modern society, in the long-term plan for the socio-economic development of the kingdom Vision-2030, the authorities put the preservation of the traditional values of Islam in the first place (2:10). Features of economic and political life in modernized Iran are also explained by the Islamic nature of society and the state. Of course, various kinds of compromises arise in real life, but the very preservation of spiritual guidelines in the 21st century sharply contrasts the experience of the development of Eastern societies with the “Enlightenment project” with its steadily growing dominance of the principles of liberalism, economic centrism and rationalism.

Nevertheless, R.Inglehart and K.Wenzel in their analysis of the processes of modernization in the countries of the East note changes in the system of values in the course of overcoming prejudices and obsolete customs. In their opinion, “the change in values... leads to important socio-political consequences...” The authors point out that “the values and beliefs of the inhabitants of less developed countries” are radically different from the values and beliefs of «members of advanced societies», but evolve in a “predictable direction” – “contributing to a change in sexual norms, gender roles, family values, religiosity, motivation for labor, relations between man and nature, social and political activity of people”, according to the pattern of “humanistic culture, which emphasizes self-expression”, and, in turn, “self-expression values are more closely related to democracy than any other factor” (16:10, 13, 15).

It is impossible not to note such an important and fundamental difference in the perception of the “Enlightenment project” in the West and in the East as the complete acceptance of the idea of progress in the first case and rejection in the second. The concept of progress is ambiguous: it is also progress, success; development from the lowest to the highest; improvement of systems in the process of development. Naturally, in Eastern society the idea of progress was accepted as an improvement, as a change for the better. But a precise understanding of progress in the context of the “Enlightenment project” implies a complete replacement of the old and obsolete with the new and better. If this is indisputable in economic and technical terms, then in the sphere of non-material life, in relation to religion, value systems and ideals, such nihilism is misunderstood in Western society and rejected in Eastern society.

At the same time, the potential danger of the complete displacement of the tradition by the “Enlightenment project” was recognized by the Eastern leaders. The

creator of modern Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, recalled that when the cultural identity of the society was threatened, he ordered to reduce the scope of the use of English in teaching, because “we could lose the good that was in Chinese schools: discipline, self-confidence, morality instilled in students and social values based on Chinese traditions and culture. I wanted to keep it all” (19:149). After all, language is the bearer of a certain culture and certain values. And today, in the speech of modern young people in China and Japan, there are a lot of anglicisms, and in their fashion and behavior – borrowings from American popular culture.

Another example of outward adherence to the “Enlightenment project” is provided by the Middle East. Fatahi Mohaddam, an Iranian-born professor at Georgetown University, draws attention to the fact that Arabs in general, unlike Europeans, live in a space of “living history”:

for them, history remains an active component of their individual life and in their living culture, and is not a museum value. The most distant past is often even more alive than the present. And it is not in some abstract sense that people remember their past, but in practice – the distant past is an integral part of their everyday thinking, activity and living identity... (34:100).

Thus, in contrast to the West, the society retains the “connection of times” and historical memory, the basic values of culture, and even more so the core of Arab history – Islam.

Basically, the authorities and society in the countries of the East, quite possibly, without realizing it, implemented it in fragments, mainly in the economic sphere of life, creating industry, infrastructure, cities. Nevertheless, the former harmony of society, the correspondence of all spheres of its life to each other, turned out to be violated in the “orientalized” “Enlightenment project”.

Conclusion

It would be strange to deny the benefits of the implementation of the European “Enlightenment project”. The world as a whole began to live better in economic terms, life expectancy and the level of education have increased, and the level of comfort has increased unprecedentedly.

At the same time, the Age of Reason seems to have ended. The goals that the Fathers of the Enlightenment set for mankind at the end of the 18th century were achieved in the 20th century, but by the beginning of the 21st century, the ideals of the Enlightenment were rejected, moreover, they turned into their opposite.

It is impossible to deny or cancel the leadership and innovation of the West in the course of its implementation of the “Enlightenment project”. The development of the entire world system turned out to be within the parameters of the project proposed by

the West and sought to achieve the goals set there. No other development option has arisen and could not have arisen in the process of implementing the project, that is, a race for the leader, which it turned out to be impossible to overtake. It's a different matter now, when the ideas and principles of the Enlightenment are well-known and assimilated to varying degrees by non-West, and technology and technology have ceased to be the absolute property of the West.

At a new level of development, the countries of the East, which used (each in its own way) the Western model of modern society and significantly reduced the gap with the West, can return to the old point of divergence, the point of choosing the path. At that time, the West suppressed or objective conditions did not allow a different, non-Western development project to open up, models of socio-economic development with a different ideological and value base to appear. The dominance of ideologies, now launched during the Enlightenment, has ended, and both the principles of ruthless competition and traditional ideals are returning to replace them. Now the basic principles of, for example, Chinese civilization – harmony and concord – are becoming increasingly known as an alternative to European principles. At the same time, in the arrangement of the modern world, as always, the economic power of the state remains the decisive argument.

After the collapse of the bipolar world system, the features of the new system become visible: two global powers – the USA and China, regional-global powers – the Russian Federation, India and Great Britain, regional powers – Poland, Germany, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, etc. China has already made an application for a new development project, and soon we can expect this from the United States, which is able to propose new goals and principles of development. The Russian Federation, which does not have global authority and influence, which suffered irreparable damage in the demographic and intellectual potential in the 20th century during the revolution, the Civil War and two World wars, can focus on survival on its own project. India's ambitions are hampered by the complexities and problems of internal development, and Great Britain has long been a natural part of the Anglo-Saxon American world.

The world needs a new project. The world develops according to the united laws, but, apparently, the new model should no longer be European-universal, but globally multivariate, giving the birth to the new multipolar world. For the East, as, indeed, for Western society, an important goal arises – to find a new harmony of society to replace the lost old one.

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