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Acute problems of Russia's socio-cultural modernization*

The need of socio-economic modernization is one of the main challenges of the 21st century facing the government, business and population of many countries. The solution to modernization tasks is unique for each country and is stipulated by a particular situation. Of special importance for Russia is the issue concerning the gap between population living standards in different, sometimes neighbouring, regions and, an overall significant lag in the living conditions of Russians compared with the inhabitants of developed countries. A necessary condition for successful modernization policy is the elaboration of specific national modernization strategies, considering the specifics of socio-cultural development of not only the whole Russia, but of each region.

Regional modernization, socio-economic development, levels of modernization and innovation.



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The 9th all-Russian research-to-practice conference “Evolution of Russian regions and the strategies for socio-cultural modernization” under the programme “Sociocultural evolution of Russia and its regions” (the programme initiated by the Institute of Philosophy of RAS) was held at the Institute of Socio-Economic Development of Territories of RAS (ISEDT RAS) on October 23–26, 2013. A record number of participants took part in it, as compared to eight previous conferences: 130 participants from 32 Russian regions and

also from Ukraine and Belarus. The plenary meetings were attended by:

- representatives of the academic and institutional science;
- Vologda Oblast Government;
- Vologda Administration;
- officials of several main oblast departments;
- mass media.

The new issues that are relevant for the development of Russia and its regions, as well as for the scientific study of the socio-economic

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and socio-cultural development of territories, have been reviewed during the course of the work. The presentations and discussions focused on two sets of problems: 1) problems regarding the formation of the strategy for the sociocultural modernization of Russia and its regions; 2) factors in the sociocultural balance of the regions modernization. Two plenary meetings, two breakout sessions and three round tables were held during the conference; 13 plenary reports and more than 60 expert speeches were presented and discussed at workshops and round tables. The conference concluded with the Coordinating Scientific Council "Problems of socio-cultural evolution of Russia and its regions", during which the results were summed up and the resolution was developed. The visitors learnt about the work of the industrial enterprise OAO Optimeh, welfare institutions – cultural and leisure centre Zabota, visited architectural complexes (Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery, Museum of Architecture and Ethnography "Semenkovo", Lace museum).

The conference information package had been published by the start of the conference that became possible due to the financial support of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Fund (RHSF). The conference was held under scientific supervision of RAS corresponding member, Head of the Centre for the Study of Social and Cultural Change (CSSCC) at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IPhRAS) Nikolay Ivanovich Lapin. The conference was organized as a part of the programme "Socio-cultural evolution of Russia and its regions", initiated by CSSCC IPhRAS in 2005. The overall goal and the main idea of this project is to present the regions as socio-cultural territorial communities in their integrity, originality and in the context of Russian socio-cultural space as a differentiated aggregate. The number of participants has been constantly increasing, with new researchers from Russian regions joining the conference.

At present (2013), 25 regions of the Russian Federation take part in the project (the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Buryat Republic, the republics of Kalmykia, Karelia, Tatarstan, the Chechen Republic, the Chuvash Republic, Krasnodar and Krasnoyarsk krais, the Astrakhan, Bryansk, Vladimir, Volgograd, Vologda, Kursk, Novosibirsk, Omsk oblasts, Perm Krai, the Samara, Sverdlovsk, Smolensk, Tyumen, Tula, Ulyanovsk, Chelyabinsk oblasts, Moscow). The conferences are held annually with the constant support of RHSF for the last nine years.

During the first five years of the programme the participants focused on the development of the socio-cultural portraits of their regions. About 25 regional portraits of various Russian federal districts were created in the 2006–2010 period. Their content is published in two dozens of monographs and hundreds of articles, eight conference information packages, the omnibus multi-author edition "Russian regions: socio-cultural portraits of regions in the all-Russian context" [Authors and general editors: N.I. Lapin, L.A. Belyayeva. Moscow: Academia, 2009].

In the onset of the second five-year period, the programme participants focused on studying the processes of socio-cultural modernization in the regions. The indices, characterizing the state of modernization in all 83 subjects and 8 federal districts of the Russian Federation (in the information and analytical system "Modernization", specially established by ISED T RAS) were calculated in 2011–2013, using the tools of the Centre for Modernization Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CIM CAEN) and data of the Federal State Statistics Service. In 2013 turned comprehensive analysis of the processes of modernization using the results of the socio-cultural portraits of the regions.

The set task was rather ambitious: not only to present the critical analysis of the modernization state, including its assessment by popu-

lation, but also to develop approaches to the modernization strategy formation in the short- and mid-term. The first results were published in the multi-author monograph "Problems of socio-cultural modernization of Russian regions" [Authors and general editors: N.I. Lapin, L.A. Belyayeva. Moscow, Academia, 2013], and were included in the information package of the 9th all-Russian research-to-practice conference "Evolution of Russian regions and the strategies for socio-cultural modernization".

The conversance with the content of the presented reports confirms the high actuality of the conference topic. Many of them make an enormous contribution to the understanding of the real state of the reviewed issues and processes, indicating deep and sharpening contradiction: on the one hand, the modernization statistical indices have been slowly increasing in the country and in the majority of regions, and, on the other hand, low sociocultural, human effectiveness of the modernization processes is observed at the same time. Modernization assumed world-wide proportions and implies global competitive challenge to each country. Russia has a need for the scientific study of the practical parameters of this challenge, the application of mathematical forecasting methods and action strategy formation that will ensure the safety and stability of the country's development, increase in human potential and population living standards. The conference attendees consider it necessary to form and publicly discuss the concept of Russian modernization.

The research results, obtained in almost 30 subjects of the Russian Federation by the specialists of research institutes and leading universities, convince that the basic principles of the competitive modernization of most Russian regions in the coming years are to be the following: the accelerated neoindustrialization and socioculturally balanced transition from primary industrial stage of modernization to

the secondary information stage. **N.I. Lapin** noted that an active state policy, ensuring the growth of investments in the creation of new knowledge and its transfer to younger generations (i.e. in science and education), was explicitly required. And, just as important, significant funds are to be directed to the realization of the existing, still considerable human, overall socio-cultural potential of the country and regions, its transformation into efficient human, socio-cultural capital. This policy should be recognized in consistent law-making practice, stimulating business (corporations, companies, enterprises, banks) to a wide use of scientific and technological achievements for increasing the share of innovation products in the total volume of shipped products, to ensuring due business contribution to the federal and regional budgets.

ISED T RAS Director, Doctor of Economics, Professor **V.A. Ilyin** made a report "Global challenges and Russia's modernization: priorities of the new decade", noting that the priority development of the new technological mode would be of paramount importance in the process of modernization. It is necessary to increase the rate of innovation extension and, most importantly, to increase investments in human capital for Russia's successful modernization in the next decade. It is important to include main indicators of modernization in the assessment of the activities of the regional and federal authorities and to consider them as the criteria of national security. Socio-economic changes in society are successful, when they comprise conscious and responsible participation of the most significant forces: the authorities, business and society.

The Leading Scientific Associate of the Centre for the Study of Social and Cultural Change at the Institute of Philosophy of RAS, Doctor of Social Sciences **L.A. Belyayeva** delivered a report devoted to the issues concerning the correlation between modernization and social capital in Russian regions.

At that, social capital was considered as a factor determining the specifics and pace of modernization. Lyudmila Aleksandrovna demonstrated the social capital measurability and the need to provide indicators, appropriate to the conditions of Russia, for creating socio-cultural portraits of regions. It was noted that societies with the developed social capital, including high level of trust, strong civic identity, positive social ties and relations, have more favorable opportunities for modernization, especially for the modern – secondary modernization.

According to the Kursk State University Professor, Doctor of Philosophy Ye.A. Kogai, Russia's social-cultural space is a multi-dimensional space of social processes, relations, practices, attitudes and agents that are inter-related and interact with each other. It is a self-organizing phenomenon with various social processes, closely connected with the transformations in the economic, political and cultural spheres, unfolding during the last decades. The implementation of the modernization transformations presses for the transformation of social institutions, appropriate law-making practice, and the activation of human resources. Only realizing these conditions, one may consider the transformation of rather significant socio-cultural potential in the real socio-cultural capital.

Doctor of Philosophy, Professor of the Philosophy Department of the Astrakhan State University S.A. Khrapov brought up a paramount issue concerning the crisis of public consciousness as a socio-cultural factor limiting modernization in modern Russia. He indicated that the collapse of the USSR and modernization problems objectively acted for Russia as more significant historical conditions than the processes of the world social development. Despite the fact that the rates of Russia's economic development have increased in recent years, it is fair to say that until now the social dynamics of our country is still of a

“catch-up nature” in relation to the United States, the European Union and Japan. The issues of differentiation, polarization, economic and socio-cultural development of Russian regions are particularly important. According to the authors, when considering the issue concerning the balance between Russian society and the transformation of public consciousness, it is necessary to identify the potential for such changes. The transformation of public consciousness under the conditions of the post-Soviet Russian society formation manifests itself in the paradoxical combination of universal (structural-functional, systemic, global) and domestic (modern, historic and cultural) mechanisms and characteristics of modernization.

Professor of the Tyumen State University, Doctor of Social Sciences V.A. Davydenko dwelled on the economic mechanisms of the social structure formation (modernization or archaicism). He noted that the fundamental structural problems still remain in force, i.e. extremely low level of innovation, investment and social activities; prevalence of state employees and officials of all levels in the middle strata; weak achievement motivation and lack of self-confidence. The archaicism of social life is expressed in the decreasing assessments of civic activism level, steady growth of religious sentiment, the contradiction between the declared values and activities of citizens.

A number of joint decisions have been elaborated during the final session of the Coordinating Scientific Council:

1. It is necessary to develop regional and interregional cooperation between universities and research institutes in studying the processes and problems of modernization.

2. It is advisable to supplement the used tools with the parameters and indicators of modernization that are actual for Russia.

3. It is reasonable to develop in Russian regions a long-term strategy, comprising a set

of regional programmes and municipal projects reducing the factors of inertia and resistance to modernization, and most importantly, enhancing the factors supporting neoindustrialization of regions and their transfer to the information stage of modernization.

4. The modernization, using both the opportunities, provided by domestic innovation potential and foreign advances, is more effective. Different time-frames may be needed for the transition to the information stage of modernization, due to considerable differences in the conditions of even neighboring territories.

The conference attendees expressed their gratitude and sincere appreciation to N.I. Lapin, who, as the Chairman of the Coordinating Scientific Council "Problems of socio-cultural evolution of Russia and its regions", contributed to its effective work for many years, directing efforts to strengthen the interregional relations and scientific cooperation between the institutes, to resolve urgent problems of socio-cultural changes and modernization development of territories. The participants supported the initiative of the Perm State University to hold the next 10th conference in October, 2014 at its base.