European liberalism - an ancestor of all subsequent liberal ideas – has faced hard resistance in Russia making an impression that it is the archenemy of the modern Russian society. Moreover, denunciation of explicit and imaginary vices of liberalism gets so heated with high-intensity emotions that one might exclaim: “Hannibal at the gates!” Meanwhile, there are no reasons for such hardheaded and therefore intentional excitement. Why?

KEYWORDS: liberalism, economic analysis, policy, ideology, economic history

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Scientific sociology accepts objectivity of the three-layer social structure: economics – politics – ideology. Accordingly, there are “ideological”, political” and “economic” liberalisms.

Ideological liberalism stands no chances to succeed in a society where high moral standards of the population are interpreted as an inherent quality, and an ineradicable respect to traditions supports a natural drive to conservatism of the majority of participants of local historic process.

The chances of political liberalism are similarly illusive: the many-centuries, unshake-able institution of strong power demonstrates the firmness of the established archaic social architectonics.

The picture becomes very different, however, when it concerns economic liberalism: this is where the real and probably irremovable danger for the system of the winning conservatism is hidden. Economy is not ideology where a treatise can be put up against another treatise; it is not politics when political PR can be beaten by another political PR. Economy is the only field of social being where economic forms are rated honestly and the winner is not a more convincing treatise or a politician but the more convincing reality named efficiency.

A society, that for a long period of history demonstrates a sustainable superiority in productivity and organization of social labour, in the mechanism of solving social problems and in the quality of everyday life, will inevitably win in competition with all other, less efficient methods of „team work“. If economic liberalism determines the above advantages,
no matter how heavily it might be defeated in politics and ide-ology, all will be temporary since it stands for something nations dream of at all times. Only one thing remains – to make sure that it is economic liberalism that ensures su-periority in productivity and organization of social labour, in the mechanism of solv-ing social issues and enhancing the quality of the everyday life.

**HOW DIFFERENT IS ECONOMIC ANALYSIS FROM POLITICAL-AND-IDEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS?**

A hasty, shameful rejection of scientific methodology of social studies, represented by Marxism, above all else confirmed a pretty superficial understanding of that method-o-logy by Russian social scientists who, due to that shallowness, imagined themselves the masters of the society. That fallacy was very costly – not for them, quickly enlist-ed in the neophytes of empirical positivism (Economics) – but for Russian society. Today’s battle of conservators with liberalism might have even a higher historic price. Nevertheless, a victory of anti-liberals over liberals in political or ideological spheres has no real value: it is a victory of some words over other words. Scientific social analysis has a different basis – revealing and analyzing the objective trends in de-velopment of public production. Only these trends and not political-and-ideological charms form the meaning of economic history, leading on politics and ideology.

In the modern obliviousness of the basic principles of social science it should be re-called that economic development is a natural history process, the nature of which is no less objective than physical or chemical processes. Denying this fundamental principle is equal to denying social science itself. Unfortunately not all Russian social scientists (especially those who do not have even a basic economic background) un-derstand it: naively (or maliciously?), they try to sell an idea to non-economists that social laws obey national (or even worse – ethnic) boundaries. Those scholars of “commercial conscription” do not guess that this is the same if physicists would divide atoms into “French”, “Chinese” or “Brazilian”.

An understanding that economic analysis is not reduced to econometrics comes late (sometimes too late): economy is not simply production or technology, but a histor-ic form of its organization programmed by the imperatives of the preceding and current levels of production development (mass production technologies). Therefore, ideology and politics are always secondary, economic derivatives, a battle-field of reflections and views about the objective world, while economy constitutes the objective social reality.

**WHAT DOES “EUROPEAN LIBERALISM” MEAN?**

The history of European liberalism extends back over at least five centuries, descend-ing from the Renaissance. Its evolution during this period was quite complex, liberal-ism was rejected multiple times and called back again, and turned into a complex ide-ological system with many trends and connotations. The core, however, remains solid – the key point of economic liberalism is the demand for a greater freedom for economic agents through decreased intervention of the state in the private life of the society.
Everyone who shares this demand as the main imperative of social progress is a liberal. Everyone who has a different understanding how social drivers work is an anti-liberal. That is all there is to plain demarcation in Russian and, by the way, foreign, public life and thought. In terms of economic liberalism, the gist of developing social formations is in the objective need for the maximum possible – for a particular stage of economic development – degree of freedom to economic agents (on the basis of deepening the system of social division of labour through its two permanent forms – specialization and cooperation of labour and production). As soon as the maximum degree of economic freedom of economic agents for a particular level of development of production forces is reached (the main source of increasing production efficiency), as soon as the historic “limit of economic freedom” is exhausted, economic stagnation began, transforming into a subsequent crisis of production.

A transition to a new production technology eliminates the contradiction and opens the way to new forms and a new level of economic freedom for the participants of social production. This approach enables understanding that at each turn of economic history competition between national systems is in a continuous search and building up a socially efficient mechanism of providing the maximum degree of freedom to economic entities. The winning national economy does it in reality rather than by assurances and slogans. However, due to its relative independence, political-and-ideological “superstructure” can resist this objective economic regularity and accuse economic liberalism, dooming the country to the inevitable economic catastrophe in the global competition between national economies.

**The history of mankind development is a long and painstaking transformation of the crowd of impersonal, restrained producers in a constellation of free and, therefore, efficient individual creators.** The material basis of this transformation is permanent liberalization of the system of economic organization of national production. Such liberalism is especially needed for the emerging “knowledge economy” that cannot be created by administratively pushed “cogs in the machine”.

At some point, History set a cruel but irrefutable argument – dividing the economy of a single nation into the “capitalist” and “socialist” models – the Federative Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, North and South Vietnam, North and South Korea. And everywhere economic superiority was won by the system that in Russia is called “liberal”. Understanding this circumstance explains the aspiration of the former socialist countries to join the European Union (even Serbia that, it seems, must turn away from the EU after the air bombardments, not to mention Ukraine, that with ins-and-outs but also claims to be choosing the road to European liberalism).

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. Objective economic trends are invincible. They do not give way to words or spells and are indifferent to new and old theories, and are ruled by their own logic - moving to new levels of efficiency, which is the economic core of social progress. Since economic liberalism supports such efficiency, sooner or later it will transform the economic organization of domestic production in Russia.
2. Russian economy has always been a mixed system. Therefore, economic liberalism based on state-of-the-art production technologies, so far is present in Russian economy to a limited extent, matching development of the advanced technological mode in Russia. It is this “epicenter” (the “breeding-ground”) of liberalism that must have been expanded as a result of a geared-up modernization of Russian economy. Liberalism (let’s not indulge a vain hope)
will never disappear until the problem is solved and the summits are conquered that can only be solved and reached with its help.

3. The future, indeed, is in the “economy of knowledge”. Such economy requires a new scale of liberalization. “Computer production” technology revolutionizes all aspects of society, including higher education. Here the liberal revolution will mean overcoming an unsubstantiated “gigantomania”, pretty alien to this field, as well as “vertical” in-house hierarchy destructive for academic freedom at universities.

A humiliating centuries-long model of “catching-up development” is the penalty for age-old ideological violence over the economy. And it’s about time to comprehend: economy, especially market economy originally emerged as a space of freedom, as a system of liberalism, as a realm of civil society and private law. Historically, today’s “victory” over economic liberalism will inevitably turn into a strategic defeat tomorrow. This cannot be allowed.

Economic trends cannot be “invented” or “implemented” because of the continuity of historically determined economic development, growing out of the given level of technology. Economic trends do not need interpreters or protection; if the trends are economic, which means objective, they will carve their way because they represent general economic regularities of social development.

A choice between liberalism and its rejection is not an issue of ideology or politics, it is an economic imperative, and, as history teaches us, economy is a no-nonsense game: it sends a message to the society once – no response, again – no response, and the third time may never come.

It is not for the institutions of power to determine which ideology the economy needs - the economy is beyond ideology and is guided by an intrinsic logic of its development.

Should not we, who in the XX century built up the most ideocratic economy in the world, know how destructive it can be?

The great economists make it a common knowledge that one cannot judge historical epochs by what is written and said about them by politicians and ideologists. The essence of a historic period is shown only through its economic trends. It allows us to state that the modern period for Russian economy is a transition from conservatism to liberalism, the way that many countries have travelled along and that is followed by those ones that have not yet had a chance to do it (due to various historic deviations).

The economy “talks” to the society in a special language: if the latter hears it, understands and helps actualizing the economic trends, the economy responds with increased production efficiency and national well-being, if it is prevented, the economy protests with economic crises and stagflation.

Although moving to liberalism is a sort of an “atemporal” breakthrough for Russian economy, today is an especially good moment since we are going through an exceptionally rare period in economic history - a transition from one production mode (“industrial”) to another, a more efficient one (“post-industrial”). The uniqueness of such transitional epochs is that all countries, regardless of the level of their development under the frame of the previous mode of production are leveling-up their starting positions with regard to mastering the technology of the new production mode. It is significant that nowadays practically all countries across the globe are building up the post-industrial “knowledge economy”, and all are novices in this new economy. To actualize the production potential of the economy of knowledge not only new technologies but also a different economic organization of production is required. The
country that can do it earlier than others will win in the global competition between national economies.

And what stands behind the definition “different”? The new level of liberalizing activities of primary economic agents!

If Russia manages to make a real move to such liberalization combining it with the “computer technology”, we would get a chance to break into the group of the world leaders.

A “one-way love” of European liberalism to Russian economy will become “mutual” only when modern technologies and management will prevail as the material basis of domestic production. The question is when?

In 1936 the greatest Russian poet Alexander Pushkin passionately wrote the lines that lit up the lives of all generations of Russians: “…And long the people yet will honour me Because my lyre was tuned to loving-kindness And, in a cruel Age, I sang of Liberty And mercy begged of Justice in her blindness…” Extraordinary, but in the original Russian version only Liberty is written with the capital letter out of all other feelings. Pushkin was a Genius in-deed!

REFERENCES


