

## Axial vacuum

*“The reality of the social climate is marked by the tragic feeling of the choice for a permanent bifurcation, either towards a project failed out of various reasons or towards the escape from any project which is tied to the place or the time of a nation.”*

Historical changes are perceived as cultural turbulences, without exception. Despite the interpretation of change mostly in economic terms, as in the case of post-communist transition, what actually occurs is the passage from one formula of social organization to another. The focus in this case ought to be strictly on the values, as it ultimately concerns the people’s concepts and way of living.

By and large, this change is one of societal ideal. Of course, we aren’t facing a mechanical possibility, as a swift and simple replacement of the leading image of behaviors is an illusion. Changing the motivational target is an operation of psychological extraction, which is ruled by complex rules, not obviously centered on the palpable, material dimension.

Essentially, the transformation ought to have the determinants and the consequences specific to the Axial Era, enabling it to be a new spiritual origination of the world after the communist experiment. It would then lead to an inappetence for any kind of experiment, both in the East and West, including for the type which defined the post-communist episode and its neoliberal counterpoint. The top difficulty of this watershed is the inadequate treatment of society through the inhibition of its creative function, the societal innovation.

The excessive use of economic arguments in trying to explain the path of post-communist change cripples the truth and eliminates meanings. Post-communist transition, like any other radical shift in social organization, is either built on trans-economic needs, or it becomes an experiment inflicted by violence. The adoption of the post-communist project as a trajectory for the destiny of man is focused on the standards of life, with an identity substrate for the individual and thus with implications on the social climate which is prepared to generate a new type of comfort. In the absence of a climate favorable to the understanding of this, post-communist transition becomes a simple dislocation of statuses, a violent method of intervening in the expectations of people. The transition is depleted of content, it contravenes the frameworks on which people build their expectations of the way the world works.

The confusing fact is that the way things are arranged differs from the model of progress assessment with an eye on future development. The sense of perception is turned toward the past by limiting the project of change to the economic issues, exclusively focused on reconstituting a previous system – e.g. the system of property. This limitation puts the cultural association for the change in organization at odds with moving forwards toward the future. Social creativity is inhibited, as well risk taking, the innovation of means and resources, the fructification of initiative, the support for progress, the emancipation of social involvement, developmental growth, the frenzy of wealth, the spontaneity of do-goodery, the fertility of the climate and individual productivity. Only imitation is being stimulated as a behavioral norm.

The great error regarding the interpretation of post-communist transition is the disregard for the social memory, the fact that the main way in which the process of change is being perceived is as the reestablishment of a state of fact that had been brutally dislodged. The transition, as a retro-projection and not a projection, disturbs the system of rules belonging to the reasoning which has been inculcated with the modern cultural ideologies. When change is expected as a solution for progress, but it takes place as a restoration of the past century, an inhibitive cognitive force appears.

The substance of a dystopia from the pages of a history manual is being installed in the intellect of the human universe which is structured by the promise of the expected future. It is an upheaval of feelings, sentiments and perceptions, a reboot of the generation-of-sacrifice model, a rerouting of the expectations of progress into a loop going around the future, as a solution for coming into the normality of the time.

The social memory becomes in these conditions the source of the anti-experiment. Resorting to distributing blame amplifies the resistance. An avalanche of institutions to break the memory strengthens the perception of transition as that of a social experiment. The elite is culturally minor, operating exclusively in the space of managerial accounting, and it doesn't have the comprehensive view of the deep fundamentals and of the extensive horizon of the zeitgeist.

As a mental image of transition, the return to the past is doubly black marked by the ruin of a project and by the West's showcase display. The reality of the social climate is marked by the tragic feeling of the choice for a permanent bifurcation, either towards a project failed out of various reasons or towards the escape from any project which is tied to the place or the time of a nation. The dominant trends in social behavior are given by social anomia – with a minimalist limit given by the chronic experience of survival and subsistence – on one side, and by

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emigration on the other. On each trend the post-communist transition causes the dissolution of the fundamentals of society – as cultural sociologists say – and of society as a nation, which is its fundamental identity.

The escape from communism – as the sense of post-communist transition – takes place at a one-on-one scale, as a reality which dissolves the social cohesion in trying to escape the societal experiment. The part which chooses the solution of the past reconstitutes the society of subsistence, while the other part chooses a reinvention of identity to fit the Western showcase.

The description of post-communist transition in these terms has larger cultural determinants, many of the originating from the hegemony of the cultural model of the economical. The Marxist aggression of the economical over the social, which motivated the post-communist project, is rediscovered in the transition's priming pressure exerted by the materialist obsession of the neoliberal recipe for change, which produces disengagement. In this case social memory cannot be defeated.

Equating yesteryear's consequences of change with those of yesterday's is experientially justified, the result being the dismissive attitude toward reality and the adoption – today – of escape solutions.

Marin Dinu



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