

# Introduction

This issue of the «*Outlines of Global Transformations*» is devoted to party-political systems of the modern world. While in Europe and the US parliamentary parties have gradually become a dominant organizational form in public sphere, institutionalizing otherwise disperse civil society, in the non-Western world parliamentarism plays a different part with civil society institutions often merely camouflaging the interaction between traditional social groups. The issue's contributors aimed to study the most illustrative examples of such interaction with the widest possible geographical coverage.

Nevertheless an attentive reader will easily discover a significant gap in this issue. This refers to the absence of a special article devoted to the Communist Party of China. This negligence was caused by the desire not to reduplicate last year's issue, devoted specifically to China – № 5 of 2017 titled «*Chairman Xi's First Five-Year Plan*». The role of the Communist Party in Chinese society was then separately analyzed in the articles by I.Yu. Zuenko and E.N. Rumyantsev, with due regard to the strengthening one-man rule of the reigning PRC's chairman.

Within this issue special attention is paid to Russia's historical example. The first article of the collection is A.Ya. Livshin's study on the Soviet Union's Communist Party – in many respects a unique political structure cementing the society and the state in the USSR. In much the same way that the Soviet Union had become an example of a bizarre synthesis of traditional imperial form and its new ideological content, the Communist Party that had created the new state also embraced many, sometimes incompatible development trends. Since late 1920s and basically until the USSR's collapse the party had held a monopoly for exercising con-

trol on the scale of the entire Soviet society though it is during this historical period that the inner-party democracy plummeted.

The CPSU also played a big part in controlling the regional elites. The USSR had arisen on the ruins of the Russian Empire as a result of many tradeoffs, first of all, in the question of nationalities. The hierarchic «federation of federations» which emerged in 1922 as a result of this policy remained stable only as long as the party, the state and the federation preserved relative equilibrium. That said it is strict partisan discipline which restrained republican elites that made the federation so strong – as a matter of fact many Soviet regime critics even deemed the USSR's federal structure a fiction. The communist party's political discredit during Perestroika turned out to be fatal as without it the Soviet federalism proved unsustainable.

Most part of the issue's materials deal with the problems of Europe. The article by N.I. Platonova and G.N. Mitin touches on legal regulation of political parties' funding through the example of Russia and Spain. The authors compare the two countries with respect to their late onset of the so called «democratic transition». In both cases the state aimed to create such partisan funding mechanism that would strike the balance between public and private funding. However instead of fencing off the increasing political corruption this solution caused Russia and Spain to drift rapidly towards governmentalization of parliamentarism.

The study by D.V. Shmelev is devoted to J.-L. Melenchon's political biography and left-wing French populism while the article by G.N. Kaninskaya describes the phenomenon of right-wing French populism. A.O. Domanov has focused on ana-

lyzing the content of French Eurosceptic parties' election programmes.

The issue of ideological and rhetorical migration of Western Europe's far-right parties, as shown in the article by A.E. Yas-hlavskii, sits alongside criticism of the EU. The skeptics consider it as a supranational Union meddling in the internal affairs of the member states and dictating them the terms of their national migration policy. Despite some success of the Western European far right appealing to the citizens' concern with migrants' inflow, their possible rise to power in the immediate future, according to the author, is questionable. At least until those forces manage to get rid of the negative public image associated with Nazism, racism and xenophobia.

The case of the small Austria is characteristic. A.S. Badaeva recons that the artificial formation of Austrian identity in the post-war period and minimization of Austria's denazification process make Austria's Liberty Party quite a dangerous player in the country's political game as well as an inspiring example for neighboring states where nationalist and ultra right parties walk tall again against the backdrop of the European Union's migration crisis. Moreover, through the example of Austria's Liberty Party one can assume the end of «big parties» era in Europe. This party's long history and its evolution stages are representative and educative when studying ultra-right movements in Western Europe. As early as 1980s the region entered the era of populism that appeals to the needs and requirements of the masses, and thus became an integral part of each elections campaign.

Thus, in the very Old World the liberal consensus and liberal democratic political model in general is being diluted. According to E.G. Soloviev, while struggling for the so called «median voter» parties have ultimately lost definite ideological and social base. In line with this trend clear classification of political parties in-

to right-wing and left-wing was increasingly becoming a mere political tradition. In populist parties' programme settings there is often a quite complicated mixture of right wing, nationalist, conservative socio-cultural elements and left wing economic approaches. Striving to withstand electoral outflow traditional parties have to snatch up some of their opponents' key programme features as well as biting political slogans for further integration into their policy, thus radicalizing their own stand on a number of issues. However if Europe's right wing populists fail to diversify their political toolkit focusing only on governments' inefficiency in solving migration issues, they will further remain relatively minor parties.

Comparing certain functions played by parties within any given society helps to better understand and check against each other their public sphere control mechanisms. Such control can take on different forms. Latin America, whose state is examined by N.M. Yakovleva, is generally characterized by the extreme political instability. The author recons that presidential systems' innate disbalances within legal and regulatory framework facilitate consolidation of personalist regimes of various ideological overtones and bring about the opportunities for accumulation of power into the state leader's hands. Presidents' broad powers and weakening of parliaments' control functions facilitate the boom of corruption that has become epidemic over the last years affecting top echelons of power in almost every country.

According to A.G. Volodin, civil society and its institutions in non-Western part of the oecumene initially evolved as a part of «metropole-colony» political and economic relational system with India being its most advanced element. Nonetheless, despite adopting some of British experience, Indian parliamentary democracy regime plays a role completely unchar-

acteristic for Europe. First of all, it downplays the consequences of traditional caste society erosion and interfuses cross-national contradictions within the former empire, as independent India had been created by transforming unitary British India into a federation.

Talking of Japan, according to D.V. Streltsov, political parties here were formed within the existing vertical power structure and as an effective opposition neutralization tool. In party-building creating an organizational carcass held a clear priority over ideological content. Parties that held no power and had no chance to join the governing coalition technically were not political parties at all. They remained parliamentary organizations, not even necessarily mass membership ones. In mid-1950s all political parties, except for the communists, had their main focus not on implementing their programme settings, but on providing their current politician members with the most convenient way to get a deputy's seat in the next elections. Nowadays, considering de-ideologization of political environment and increasing political parties' ideological and organizational amorphousness, populist political base has become much more demanded in the society. Prime minister S. Abe has picked up on the request for a leader able to speak in layman's terms.

Not less important is the experience of South-East Asia. In her article on Thailand N.G. Rogozhina has addressed quite a vital issue of imitating Western electoral procedures' exterior forms outside the West. Modern political history of the kingdom has been a struggle of two trends: authoritarian and democratic. That said the parties have become not parliamentary democracy institutions, but elite organizations acting in the interests of social establishment.

Islam states' political systems also feature elements of democracy and self-gov-

ernment, though in forms significantly different from the Western ones. Iran's legislative branch, according to the article by N.M. Mamedova, is decentralized with ministers being not so much top-ranking administrators, as political figures.

Political regimes in Central Asian countries genetically stem from the Soviet period, that's why their legitimacy is residual, in their opponent's opinion. The article by D.B. Malysheva suggests that the future of the region's former Soviet republics is anything but simple.

Thus, various political structures called «parties» pervade the social lives of basically every modern community – from Western Europe to equatorial Africa and South-East Asia. It seems that in this adaptation of alien political lexicon by non-Western cultures one can perceive the historical triumph of the so called collective West. However the universal unification of conceptual framework we observe is deceptive as the content behind the unity of external modernist form can be most unexpected – often patriarchal and archaic. Despite rapid globalization the mankind is persistent in resisting the attempts to unify its lifestyles according to a single liberal egalitarian standard.

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