

HUMAN EXISTING IN THE CONTEXT OF INFORMATION CIVILIZATION: A NEW CONCEPT OF SOCIAL FUTURISM

Assoc. Prof. Evgeniya Kuznetsova¹

Assoc. Prof. Olga Goryacheva²

Assoc. Prof. Gulchachak Patenko²

¹University of Management “TISBI”, Russian Federation

²Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Russian Federation

ABSTRACT

The motif of a repressive state and aggression towards a person becomes a leading social human motif in the twentieth century. The authors of the article explore the problem of a person's being at the stage of industrial civilization and declare a number of problems. Among them are loneliness, repressiveness and aggressiveness of a society towards a person, the loss of spiritual and moral principles. The authors prove it by means of many researchers positions. According to the authors, this state of a society can be described as an anthropological crisis. The information society's building. can be a possible way out of the crisis.

But the authors believe that the formation of the information civilization leads to new complexities and contradictions. So they determine the following problems of the information society. The first is the trend that leads to the popular culture of a bad quality by means of mass media. Global technologies can lead to blurring of a cultural diversity and uniformity of cultures. Also it's necessary to call fragmentation, appearance of “computer people” who are copies of each other.

The authors propose is a concept in which a spiritual component is more important than a technological one, as we usually deal with in many other theories of futurology. Many of the contradictions of the information civilization exist because of the domination of technologies over the spiritual component as in the era of industrial civilization. We can decide all the problems by means of new views of a new philosophy. Only a person himself is capable to build a harmony between technologies and spiritual content of the information civilization. The authors write that the main aim of social futurism is to overcome technocracy and subdue all processes of social evolution to conscious human guidance. If we achieve the aim we'll be able to change the situation of disbalance between people and machines.

Keywords: anthropological crisis, industrial society, information society, mass media, social futurism

INTRODUCTION

The problem of the essence and the existence of a man, his place in society has always been in the centre of philosophical studies. The actuality of this topic is determined by the peculiarities of the transitional period of humanity's life. Reconstruction of many values, a desire for large-scale thinking, new principles in management mean a total rebuilding of social and cultural institutions (family, mass media, education) and require new approaches in organizing of human existence. The twentieth-century takes a special place in social progress. People can find their creative potential and make a lot of inventions. But at the same time a man turns out to be on the verge of self-destruction. The phenomenon of self-destruction is a result of human activities. In our paper, we'll try to analyze the situation and understand why it happens.

METHODS AND MATERIAL

Here we use a historical-comparative and a typological methods of research as we compare a society at different stages of its existence, different spheres of this society, a life of a man, determine typologically common and different features of industrial and information civilizations. Also we use systematical method as it helps to produce the analysis of the problem from different points of view and make a correct conclusion.

THEORY

One of the main characteristic features of a contemporary society is the dependence of a man on a machine. G. Marcuse characterizes our society as formed on the basis of technological progress and a modern man as "one-dimensional man" [1]. The term "one-dimensional man" means that a consumer tries to satisfy only his consumer's desires. People depend on this society, its formation occurs by means of the formation of rational thinking, which produces a repressive effect on moral, aesthetic, spiritual orientations of a person. Andre Glucksmann believes that the essence of relations in society is depression [2]. It is clear that society and state are the embodiment of totalitarianism.

The motif of a repressive state and aggression towards a person becomes a leading social human motif in the twentieth century. E. Fromm finds that loneliness is a characteristic of a contemporary man. According to his point of view, loneliness and helplessness are caused by a human desire to gain economic independence. Attainment of economic freedom and prosperity leads a man to loneliness, insecurity and isolation from the outside world [3]. Meanwhile, a man like a social creature cannot live alone. D. Rismen writes that a man feels alone in the impersonal crowd [4].

Riot is one more dominating motif of human existence in the twentieth century. Many philosophers of the twentieth century believe that riot is a protest of a contemporary man against the world of alienation and

indifference. A. Camus believes that the whole human existence is absurd. In his work “Myth of Sisyphus” he shows this absurdity [5]. According to his point of view a revolt precedes any civilization and it is an integral part of it. Revolt is a manifestation of human rights.

One more characteristic feature of human existence at the stage of industrial society is mass character of many phenomena and processes. The twentieth century has provided enormous material for awareness of the essence and role of masses. It's a time of two world wars, of numerous revolutions, of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts, of emergence and fall of totalitarian regimes, urbanization, migration of population. The dramatic transformation in various fields of a modern society means a fundamental change in the nature of human activity. The main distinguishing feature in the twentieth century is mass character. Mass production, mass distribution, mass creativity lead to the formation of mass culture.

A number of these phenomena puts humanity in crisis — ecological, spiritual, and moral. This civilization forms an idea of inexhaustible natural resources, their uncontrolled use by a man as the supreme being possessing the mind. And finally, the existing civilization forms a type of mass consumer, owner of such quality as permissiveness.

Thus, the syndrome of crisis arises in the nineteenth century at the top of economic, political and social upheavals. The way out of a contemporary crisis is a leading topic of research of many scientists in various fields of knowledge: philosophy, sociology, psychology, ecology. However, judgments of many scientists have in common the idea that the cause of the crisis lies in faulty actions of mankind, which becomes, on one hand, the creator of civilizational norms and values, on the other hand, it becomes a result, a product of functioning of technogenic civilization. "A very important role is given to logic and mind ..., and many other forms of human cognition such as meditation, prayer, dreams are ignored". (K. Lebak) [6]. K. Lebak believes that one of the major mistakes of contemporary mankind is recognition of mind as the only correct method of scientific investigation. [6].

Meanwhile, a faith in mind leads to another lurch of the industrial age. It is a loss of spiritual and moral quality in human nature. However, we can say that a man is a personality only if he has consciousness in conjunction with the mind. And a way to the rescue of mankind lies in the formation of a true morality, in a sense of responsibility for the thoughts and actions, awareness of own imperfections and, as a consequence, striving for constant spiritual development. One of the most serious defects of civilization's consciousness is the sense of superiority of a man over all living, and his right to reign on Earth. R. Atfild sees the cause of global problems in the faith in progress inherited from German metaphysicians, which allows exploiting natural wealth.

He declares that it's a mistake to think that if people are so much allowed, it must mean lack of moral prohibitions in practice. God according to Bible, cares

for welfare of all living, not only mankind, and people must take care of nature, and must not destroy anything. [7].

The cult of knowledge proclaimed by Enlightenment leads to one more trouble. It's a creation of ideological doctrines based on racial or class superiority. It is a step to the emergence of totalitarian regimes. According to French sociologist, J. Semlen moral sense is dulled in this society as it is inherited in the individual, not in the mass. The dominant of society over an individual is a threat to the very existence of morality [8]. A society built on any ideological idea tries to depress free personality by any violent means because this society doesn't accept any alternative ideas and actions. And we have total wars, mass violence, an enormous destruction of human resources in the twentieth century. So we can say that the most terrible disaster among all threatens existing in the contemporary world is an anthropological disaster that means "the destruction of human in a man". In this case we have right to declare that the crisis of the modern world has not a civilizational character, but a social one.

RESULTS

An architecture of a society in the era of industrial civilization is presented by technosphere, sociosphere, infosphere. Each sphere plays its own role. "Technosphere creates material values; sociosphere determines roles of individuals in a society, information sphere creates information which is necessary for the whole social system" [9].

Some characteristics of information civilization are evident already. Demassification is one of them, it means a large number of different ideas, social institutions, social human roles, diversity of scientific knowledge. Now we pay a special attention at the ability of an individual to create, create new ideas. A. Toffler writes that ability to synthesize is more important than the ability to analyze. Synthesis takes the first place in science now. A specialization is not important nowadays, global thinking dominates. Such branches of science as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics also begin to dominate. All these changes influence on the specificity of people's duties. Many of them work at home and have flexible working hours. [9]. In sociosphere changes influence on a family. So, in different countries we can observe different types of families. We mean single-parent families, arranged marriages, homosexual marriages. There are many changes in infosphere. Modern mass media by means of their qualities have a huge power in a society. Mass media determine all main changes. Among them are technological changes in the technosphere, the creation of new forms in culture.

One of the main kinds of resources in a new era is information which leads to transformation of processes of communication. But not all foreign scientists determine information society in this way. They have two different positions towards this concept. The representatives of the first position call the

civilization of a new type as a postindustrial one. Among them are D. Bell, A. Turen, R. Darendorf, and A. Etuloni. The representatives of the second position call it an information one. Among them are A. Toffler, E. Masuda, G. Neisbit. Let's investigate these points of view.

In 1976 term "postindustrial society" gets its official ideological status in the report of the Advisory Commission on questions of political mechanism of national development. The authors of this theory believe that service and sphere of consumption have a particular importance in this society [10]. Term "post" means changes in development of high technologies, but the character of economic activity and structure of political power are the same.

The second position has been popular in the 80-ies years of the XXth century. E. Masuda notes that information society means postindustrial society [11]. G. Neisbit states that information processing is more important than "white collars" in a new era. A. Toffler determines a society of a new type as superindustrial. He finds the following features which distinguish it from industrial. The first one is a desire of each individual to satisfy his own needs. Information is more important than land, money and labour. The development is not linear, it can destroy all attainments [9].

In Russian science information society is determined as a consequence of process of informatization [12]. Thus, information, mass media, processes of communication are in the focus of modern researchers.

Any new phenomenon as a pattern of culture is fixed in the language. Language is a basical instrument of communication. Communication is an important link in the system of integration of cultures [13].

To communicate means to share, to talk, to discuss. The dictionary "Modern Western Sociology" (1990) provides the following definition of communication: 1) means of communication of objects of material and spiritual peace; 2) information's transmission from one person to another; 3) communication and sharing of information in a society (social communication). Thus, the term "interaction" is included into the term "communication". Webster's New Word Dictionary (1989) gives the following interpretation:

1. the act of transmission;
2. exchange of information, signals, messages in the conversation;
3. information or message;
4. close relations based on the sympathy;
5. means of communication.

Implementation of communication between its members in a society is realized by means of different ideas, images through system of mass media. Mass media keep and transfer cultural values in a society. According to researchers mass media keep informational relationship and interaction between individuals and groups, institutions and population, cultural patterns' creators and their consumers. Contemporary mass media can contribute to the renewal of society, the consolidation of the democratic forces and public opinion. But mass media

can lead to the opposition between political positions, confrontation and radicalism.

DISCUSSION

What does information society mean? Where can new technologies lead us? We'll try to answer these questions. We'll try to determine some phenomena of information civilization.

The first one is a steady reduction of level of content of mass media. Nowadays information can overcome any borders, it can be spread everywhere without any difficulties. An event takes place in one country, but very soon it's known in others. But can the dominant of available and understandable values lead to spiritual degradation? This question is rather actual in the context of our Russian reality. A contemporary Russian mass culture has neither historical nor ethnical roots. It is evident this is a way to a society of consumption.

We can lose cultural differentiation because of global technological chain. K. T. Teplits and E. Shilz analyze a possibility of unification of cultures. They come to the conclusion that it's impossible. The first reason is a difference between personalities. [14]. People are different because of their nature, age, intellect.

Fleetingness is one more characteristic feature of information civilization. If temporal characteristic of agrarian society is orientation for past, temporal characteristic of industrial society is adaptation for present, temporal characteristic of informational society is orientation for future and its prediction. We destroy past values, deny past thoughts, feelings. A gap between different generations is rather big already. Freedom is introduced in some absolute. But any society must be based on existing values. It's very difficult for an individual to be adapted for new values and new speeds if he denies all previous traditions. A fast development of technologies and science give raise to many ethic and philosophical issues. Cloning of a man is one of the most unclear issues here from point of view of philosophy. We begin to copy each other and become clones of each other, "computer people". A modern man gets great abilities by means of technologies, at the same time he absolutely depends on them. It's one more controversy of a society of a new type.

Information technologies have led to a crisis in our political sphere. Democracy has always been considered a consequence of free access to information. Today however we observe how information creates premises for a new totalitarian regime, as new information technologies interfere in our personal life. Any citizen's biographical fact can become unknown for everyone. It's necessary to change principles of political management to avoid it. A new type of democracy is a mosaic democracy. It is oriented on every individual. A. Toffler distinguishes three principles of political management of a new type. Among them are the following: a principle of minority,

principle of semi-direct democracy, principle of sharing responsibility in decision-making [15].

A model of consociative democracy is an alternative to democracy based on majority. Institutions and principles of new democracy include communication between different groups, elites, coalitions in Parliament, a right of veto for minority in questions which are important for them. But all these issues have to be developed.

So we deal with a large number of controversies and problems of information civilization. In order to find correct decisions we have to investigate all possible variants and develop absolutely new concepts. We need new views on life, a new philosophy free from traditional statements. At last we have to develop a mechanism to remove inter-civilizational contradictions. It's necessary to pay attention at sociocultural dominant to overcome all difficulties.

CONCLUSIONS

If anthropological crisis of industrial civilization is caused by scientific theories and cultural positions, the system of spiritual values must help us to get out of it. We need to build a new cultural model that would unite all existing in the world cultures of different nations based on human common values such as value of life (value of humanism), value of nature, value of love, value of faith in God.

Contemporary processes of informatization of a society are characterized by creation and development of new mass media, telecommunications, production and management based on computers. On one hand it contributes to universalization of cultures, on another hand it exacerbates the tendency of many nations to keep their identity. And we observe here different destructive manifestations. That's why we have to focus on problems in the sphere of intercultural interaction.

Many scientists when they analyze problems of information civilization they analyze only technologies, but they ignore sociocultural aspect. It happens because technologies dominate in our society over spiritual values. This is the main controversy of new civilization and it causes all the rest difficulties. We can remove contradictions if we're able to develop a new concept of social futurism based on eternal values on condition of keeping of new technologies.

The main aim of social futurism is to overcome technocracy and subdue all processes of social evolution to a conscious human guidance. A person is a main character in the information civilization. He creates new technologies and he creates spiritual values. And he has to find a balance between spiritual and technological aspects that allows him to live and create in a society of a new type.

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