

Human Rights — expectations and realities

The deep changes concerning HR problems in the last decade impossible to understand only on the regional (local) level. The changes enveloped the whole world, though one hardly could avoid to evaluate these changes through the prism of local situation.

12 years ago those in Russia who shared the Western conception of HR (at that time HR were an ideology problem) hoped for triumphal and peaceful extrapolation of this conception on the post-soviet space and, eventually, on the whole world. It was minority of population, mostly out of the state power system. Nevertheless not only those who made conscious choice for HR protection, but also some people in the power (Gorbachev, as example) were in euphoria. Very quickly expectations of better life, freedom, equality and brotherhood, including HR, spread among half or so of active citizens which formed the so called democratic forces. They saw their main task in cutting out the Soviet past and liquidating its consequences completely and for ever. It does not mean that they were absolutely naive and did not think about all the difficulties of the transition period. Far from it! And supporters of old ideology were strong. Those who join «democracy» against «soviet past» were eager to participate in the composing the new democratic, non-violent and «just» society. Many people spent days and nights working on their propositions how to perfect the world. Because of deep political split of society this work was mostly orientated backward (to destruction) and it limited search for creative potential of «perestroika». It is important to mention that 12 years ago few people knew the word «globalization». Twice important is the fact, that «new» democrats as well as «old» communists had mutual — Soviet — origin.

What are the results of 12 years concerning HR field? Without doubt many things noticeably changed. Quite democratic Constitution(s) was adopted. Some of newly independent states — the former Soviet republics — are the members of Council of Europe. Many HR international obligations are signed by their leadership. Some of the countries have their own ombudsmans, in Russia there is even special HR Presidential representative for Chechnya. The military soviet machine is destroying (except nuclear weapons). The people have formal right to choose whom they like among candidates on the electoral parade. They could speak of HR violations as much as they like. On the parallel — economic — field market relations little by little became comprehensive, occupying not only economy, but socio-political, cultural and national spheres as well .

The Western countries, mostly European, not the USA, also had euphoria to certain degree. Destruction of Warsaw pact, withdrawal of Soviet troops from Germany, charismatic Gorbachev and even «democratic» Eltsyn etc. created joyful expectations though mixed with the subdued suspicions. Humanitarian help flew to former USSR, creating, by the way, solid slice of criminal economy. Various forms off financial donations in support of democracy, HR and peace began to be the necessary element of Western foreign relations with eastern Europe and post-soviet states, including Russia.

In the end, after 12 years, on the post-soviet space there is a bunch of pseudo-democratic, semi-democratic and non-democratic states where monitoring of HR looking laughable because in the majority of these states practically all HR are violated. Social and economic rights are violated in both sectors of economy — state and private. In many countries state does not pay salaries for many months or even years. In Russia, after many years, even official statistics of state indebtedness appeared in this sphere. The labour relations in the private sector are hidden in the «shadow» economy. The rights of employees exist only on the paper. Duration of working hours, holidays, non-discrimination of various social groups (migrants, women, especially pregnant women, invalids, national minorities etc.) depends not on the law but only on the personal will of employer. The pensions are miserable. The economic reform brought social degradation to majority of population. The «social minority» — the new Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian etc. — belong to another world where nobody needs HR. The human rights for them are successfully replaced by money, power and violence. Corruption and violence spread over countries.

The situation with civic and political rights looks also grim. The court reform (courts of justice) is far from completion. The electoral system is based on «black PR» (it means dirty electoral technologies plus the so called «administrative resource») and transformed into corruptive process which has nothing common with democracy. The right to life is violated in many ways — by administrative and military instruments. In Russia there is slavery in the armed forces as soldiers are left without any possibilities to protect their lives. This slavery is called officially «the honourable service», but the words do not change the true essence. The political freedoms look like farce as there are no mechanisms or possibilities to influence policy from below. In some of the countries there are no serious opposition which could act legally. Some of the countries transformed into something which is quite difficult to name, to define, like Tajikistan. The civic society for post-soviet countries is still a dream.

It is a short and very much fragmented resume of local HR situation. Impossible to make full picture of 12 years history in the short presentation. After 12 years

there still is no stability on the post-soviet space. The matter is what awaits us in future. How one could evaluate the global perspectives of HR protection from local point?

Do the Western conception of HR spread beyond previous borders? Yes. And it is positive. Do the scales of HR problems diminished? No. Who are the main players in the political games around this problem? USA — as a leader of mono-polar world, then Europe which is now becoming EU. Below there are Western national states with the established democratic systems who are ahead of the world in solving HR problems in their countries. And farther down — the HR NGO which in general do not matter much on the global level.

The death of bi-polar world meant the spontaneous search for the new global structures. The death of bi-polar world meant freedom of globalization. It also meant strengthening of new, «horizontal», gamblers on the world scene. 11 of September demonstrated clash of horizontal structure of international terrorism and vertical structure of the national state. Of course, not all of horizontal players in the world are criminal. But on the civic society level the HR NGO which, because the universality of HR, should be most universal are globalized in the least degree in comparison with other structures, like TNC, for example. The dangers to be weakened because of horizontal structures offense mixed with the so called «global problems» (ecology, demography, hunger, health etc.) pressure the national states and other kinds of people's communities (religious, national) to defend themselves, creating new walls between people. But any divisions in the world inevitably became the obstacles on the way to universalization of human rights. In the intergovernmental sphere it is the strong unions of developed countries. Naturally their neighbours are eager to join these unions to secure decent life and HR for its citizens. The territorial growth of such unions is a positive tendency if one share the Western conception of HR. Those who are blaming the developed countries for their egotism create antiglobalist movement. It is still unclear what will come out of it, but it could mean the beginning of search for alternative model of globalization as well as beginning of conflicts of the new origin.

The developed countries are actively use the problem of HR in their international policy. It seems they are more and more accept the fact that for the advancement of HR outside developed part of the world they need military strength and military violence in addition to financial instruments and political pressure. There is an evident tendency to ignore the innocent victims as an inevitable waste. To counteract the criminal horizontal structures, first of all the international terrorism, they have to limit their own citizens rights and to use double standards in decision of HR problems of foreigners. In other words, in pre-

sent conditions the conception of universal HR became the danger for developed states inside these countries and their unions as the states have to defend themselves against criminal horizontal structures (not only terrorism). At the same time on the outer field the HR conception became an instrument of offense to destroy those regimes which are dangerous for preserving and supporting the certain rate of development (the problem of sustainable development). Outside the developed world the state power does not need the universal HR for their citizens. It has other tasks. But in the end in a few decades ahead everything would be decided by demographic factor.

The world is moving not «to» but «from» the principles of the Declaration of HR — the greatest past century achievement of world community in the field of HR problems. There are no common basic terms in the HR field any more. One can support antiterrorist actions in Afghanistan and not to support it in Iraq. One can support Miloshević and not to support Bin Laden. Etc. The choice is strictly personal.

What is left for HR NGO in these conditions? To oppose their own governments which use the so called double standards in the HR problems on interior and international level. Many of NGO cannot do it — they are cooperating with their government. But even if mankind history is impossible without blood and violence, somebody should stand for peace, HR and non-violence.

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