Third International Conference 'Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilizations' (Moscow, June 18–21, 2004)

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Center for Civilizational and Regional Studies in cooperation with Institute for African Studies (both under Russian Academy of Sciences) and School of History, Political Science and Law of Russian State University for the Humanities held in Moscow on June 18–21, 2004 the Third International Conference 'Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilizations'. The Institute for African Studies, Russian State University for the Humanities, and 'Uchitel' Publishing House (Volgograd) supported the Conference financially. 189 scholars from 28 countries participated in the event. 202 papers were presented at the plenary session, 24 panels, and 1 'round table'. The Conference book of abstracts was published by Center for Civilizational and Regional Studies Institute for African Studies as Volume 9 of 'The Civilizational Dimension' Series (Alexeev *et al.* 2004). The proceedings of the event, as well as the materials of the two previous Conferences (Moscow 2000 and St. Petersburg 2002) are also available at the Center for Civilizational and Regional Studies' website http://civreg.ru/.

The main goal of the Conference was to discuss the phenomena of hierarchy and power, including their spatial and temporal variations. This discussion promoted extension of knowledge of general tendencies and machinery of social transformations, of interrelationship and interaction between social, political, cultural, and economic sub-systems of society, as well as development of research metho-

dology of anthropology, sociology, history, political science, philosophy and other disciplines.

The diversity of the panels that formed the Conference Program may be reduced (though rather artificially and arbitrarily) to the panels concerned with pre-modern societies, with modern/postmodern societies, and chiefly with theoretical issues.

At the panel 'Hierarchy and Power in Dates of Archaeology' the use of archaeological data for evaluating new concepts of complex societies was discussed. As archaeological sources are more fragmentary than written sources and the observations of ethnographers, how is it possible to study authority with these poor data? What does a rich burial signify for status position or property? Is there a correlation between public inequality, power, and domination in prehistoric and archaic societies? How may we distinguish between chiefdoms and the state using archaeological sources? Thus, the main themes of the panel were the following: archaeological criteria of power and domination; archaeology and inequality; egalitarianism, rank, and stratification in archaeological perspective; chiefdom, state and civilization in the view of archaeology.

Participants in the panel 'The Order of Things: Material Culture, Practice and Social Status' elaborated on the active role material culture plays in the shaping of political and social order. It was demonstrated that the study of material culture is able to provide a powerful methodological tool to analyze and understand the ways people constantly build their social and political order. This is so because material culture is more than the objects we use on a daily basis, but it participates in the structuration of people's cultural and social universe. Being under the form of symbols of power, architectural spaces or factual weapons for instance, material culture is deeply embedded in the web of social practices. In this sense, by focusing on the effective status of material items, one opens up new perspectives to approach the aforementioned social strategies. At the panel preference was given to research dealing with social structures in a historical perspective, for instance by placing them in the *longue durée*.

At the panel 'Ideology and Legitimation of Power in Ancient and Medieval Societies' papers on the evolution and mechanism of ideology's implementation in its different aspects with regards to rulers and their power in ancient and medieval societies were given. The focus was on ancient and medieval civilizations, both eastern and western. The following problems were targeted during discussions: legitimation of power and institutions of authority in the tribe, chiefdom, and kingdom; the rise of kingship and the origin of states; kingship and priesthood, sacralization of power; society ideological principles as an instrument of succession; the divine ruler; desacralisation of power and its consequence for the society, religion and the state.

The objective of the panel 'Hierarchy, Power, and Ritual in Pre-Columbian America' was to clarify some aspects of relations between hierarchy, power, and ritual in various pre-Columbian American cultures: hierarchical social structures, political institutions of the Amerindian societies and rituals related to them; religion in chiefdoms and early states; norms and practices of Indian societies; a ritual as a regulating system; the phenomenon of so-called 'idolatry'. The pre-Columbian social and political heritage in the colonial period, transformation of pagan cult centers into Christian were also tackled.

The panel 'Divine Politics and Theocracy: Religion as a Power Mechanism in the Greco-Roman World' attempted to survey synchronically and diachronically the diagnostic case-studies of religion used as a power mechanism in the Mediterranean, ranging chronologically from the Aegean Prehistory to the end of the Greco-Roman world. The sphere of the scholars' interests included the mechanisms employed by competing elite factions and later the central palatial authorities to manipulate, exercise control over and finally appropriate both funerary ritual and religion, thus consolidating their power and legitimizing their political authority in Palatial Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece; the function of local and regional sanctuaries in archaic and classical Greece as territorial markers sanctifying the autonomy of city-states and their use of land and natural recourses; the 'Sacred Wars' between city-states,

alliances, and confederations for the direct control of panhellenic sanctuaries (Olympia, Delphi, Delos); the function of religion within the political arena of competing factions and political parties in ancient Athens, and the pivotal role of religion in the formation of amphictyonies and other confederations (Koinon, Sympoliteia); the emergence of the deified monarch (Alexander the Great and Successors, Roman Emperors); the manipulation of religion and integration of foreign cults for political reasons in the Roman Empire; the adoption of Christianity by Constantine the Great, the polemic against paganism, and the foundation of the Byzantine Empire. The interdisciplinary and comparative study of such diagnostic cases from different standpoints and through diverse methodologies and multivariate approaches was aimed at aspiring to detect certain patterns of uniformity or variation in the systematic appropriation of religion by hierarchies, and to apply such knowledge to our present and future.

The session of the panel '*Urbi et Orbi* (*Roma Aeterna*)' included a number of microhistorical studies of such basic themes as sacralization of power and representation of the ruler's image; lay and sacred aspects of the Church history. The panel's objective was to widen the research horizon by answering the question whether or not we may speak about a continuity of Roman cultural and social symbolism in the Middle Ages? In other words, is it possible to find the unique symbol of Rome? It was argued that the analysis of representations and the images of Rome helps to formulate the essential point in the study of various historical contexts clarifying each other.

The panel 'Tradition and Modernization in Political Cultures of Islamic World' was destined to analyze the interplay of hierarchy and power in the Islamic World. The panel's concern revolved around understanding of both traditional forms of Islamic political culture and recent developments. The panel's participants evaluated the influence and impacts of modernization processes. The participants' theoretical premise was that the interaction between tradition and modernization is by no means unidirectional. The paper-givers theorized the contemporary processes of crisis and transformation.

As understanding of these processes needs an adequate comprehension of the basic (*i.e.* traditional) political cultures of the Islamic World, papers on this subject were also welcomed.

The panel ('Round Table') 'Dilemmas of Leadership and Representation in Jewish and Arab Social Groupings in Israel' was dedicated to actual problems of contemporary Middle East in the historical and socio-cultural contexts. In particular, the problem of political leadership's reflection by the system of values, usually more conservative than social structures, was tackled.

The panel 'Hierarchy and Power in the Postcolonial World' was planned to elaborate on different topics related to the problem of assimilation of originally European political institutions brought by colonialism in post-colonial Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Insular Pacific. Among others, the panel covered such topics as constitutionalism and the law-giving process; central and local government: their division and interaction; the civil society formation and its prospects; colonial institutional legacy as reflected in home and foreign policy; and cultural aspects of political process in the Third World.

Anthropologists, historians, political scientists, and philologists united in the panel 'Patterns of Hierarchy and Power in Southeast Asia' attempted at exploring the unique and common features of the Southeast Asian cultural heritage which nowadays give reasons to speak about the region as a distinctive civilization, on the one hand, and to distinguish socio-cultural areas within it, on the other hand.

At the panel 'Markets and Hierarchies in the History of Civilizations' the problem of relations between authorities and market, hierarchy and market as two polar, but always cooperating institutions in light of economic history and history of civilizations was under consideration. The market was approached as a contrast to any hierarchy though market coordination has been co-existing with social and political hierarchies for centuries. In particular, the interaction between the market and society in colonial and post-colonial worlds was discussed among other aspects of the panel's problematics.

The particular interest of the participants of the panel 'Money,

Currency and Power, with Focus on Africa' was a comparison of the aftermath of government financial measures on the population under different regimes. The role of currency in controlling the people's mobility was discussed. Other studies examined the modalities of money transfers, in particular for the thousands of migrants as well as different approaches to borrowing for business purposes, in particular for women. Inflation, devaluation and trading between countries with weak currencies were discussed. A study of the representation of economic hardship in African literature and cinema, based on an informed knowledge of ownership and development, opened new perspectives in contrast with the more common anthropological emphasis on the spiritual dimension of African culture.

The participants in the panel 'Comparing the State in Africa: The Drama of Modern Development' examined the intricacies of the state through a cross-regional comparison of African development projects, past and present that bore or bear the brunt of James Scott's paradigm, which provides a comparative and historical analysis of massive projects of social engineering. The challenge was to transcend case studies in order to reveal the dynamic dramas of power and hierarchy without oversimplifying the nature of the state or development. The convenors supposed that the concerned peoples' active or passive resistance contributed as much to the failure of these projects, as the overburdening ideological and metastructural approach taken to these projects. That is why the main questions discussed at the panel were: Are development projects carried out by the state as homogeneous as envisioned by Scott? To what extent does a state with its limited financial and institutional capacity matter to people's lives? Can failure of high modernist development be solely contributed to its ideology or are there more complex and important processes at work?

The aim of the panel 'Ethnic Model of Power Legitimation in Political Practice of Contemporary Multiethnic States and Quasi-States' was to consider ideological substantiation of political actualization of the power legitimation ethnic model in the political practice of contemporary multiethnic states and quasi-states. In the context of the above mentioned problem, the following issues were

discussed: paradigmatics of contemporary ethnological science and ideological substantiation of the ethnic power legitimation model and of the ethnocratic regimes' legitimacy; the premordial paradigm in ethnology as a conceptual foundation for political self-determination of the substantiated ethnic associations, and constructivism as a theoretical and methodological background for ethnicity's depolitization and substantiation of exterritorial forms of individual ethno-cultural self-determination; the problem of ethnic groups as subjects of the law: collective rights of substantiated ethnic groups *vs.* the individual's right for free choice of the ethno-cultural identity's forms of realization; introduction of legal norms in the ethnic sphere as a tool for ethnocratic forms of government construction; ethnic models of power legitimation in political practice of contemporary states and quasi-states in the post-colonial and post-socialist countries.

The objective of the panel 'The Role of the Evolutionary Theory in the Political History of the 20th Century' was to combine the efforts of researchers from various disciplines (natural sciences, humanities) in discussing the role of the evolutionary theory in explaining social phenomena. Explanations of socio-political history of the 20th century from the evolutionary theory positions were proposed.

The panel 'Propaganda, Protest and Violence: Revolutions in the East and the West' dealt with the issues of propaganda, conflicts and violence with special reference to the revolutions during China, Japan and Russia. The topics for discussion were: propaganda in the early phase of the Chinese Revolution; Japanese emperors as potent propaganda tools in the hands of the government to achieve revolutionary changes; the social and cultural discourse in eighteenth-century Russia in the light of the conflicting values between modernization and Russian bunt; problems and crisis of the conservatives during the first Russian Revolution in early twentieth century; the issues and problems the non-Western Christian Civilizations confront in their endeavors to developing a democratic system of government.

Papers analysing historical background, socio-cultural determinants, psychological factors, and other characteristics that determined the rise of powerful leaders of the last century, who influ-

enced the whole world, were presented at the panel 'The Will to Power and Its Realisation – The Rises and Falls of Absolute Leaders'. The main perspectives from which the phenomenon was approached by paper-givers were historical and psychological.

The panel 'Civil Society, Civil Education and Cultural Identity in the Time of Globalization' was dedicated to the problems of contemporary global changes and challenges. The main questions were: How and with what results do the institutes and values of the civil societies interact with the institutes and values of the multicultural societies? Would this interaction strengthen the trend of the global society towards a certain institutionalized order within which the norms and values of the modern liberal-democratic societies will be dominant or this process strengthens on the whole of the tendency to social disintegration, spontaneous breakup or intentional destruction of the old structures, based on the national identities, cultural disruptions and conflicts of civilizations? What are then the tasks, possibilities and contents of the forming of the national versions of the civil culture? The panel was divided into two subpanels. Subpanel 1 was dedicated to civic education in the time of globalization. Experts in education took part in its work. 'Civil society and socio-cultural identity in contemporary world' was the research object of the participants in Subpanel 2.

The paper-givers in the panel 'Power as "Great Mystery"' shared the opinion that the need in understanding of power as a broad phenomenon is felt nowadays. It was argued that power cannot be reduced to a certain social institution, possessing means of physical compulsion; first and foremost, it is always a 'strong-willed relation' between a subject and an object. The role physiological approaches may play in shaping the general understanding of power was stressed.

Some positive and negative aspects of social and cultural estrangement were discussed by participants in the panel 'The Use of Estrangement as a Pivotal Instrument in the Study of and Defence against Hierarchy and Power'. Some negative aspects of estrangement pointed out by paper-givers are: detachment that leads to selfishness, narcissism or self-destruction, disassociation from human environment for its exploitation, inclination to self-assertion. Some positive aspects are: detachment that minimizes emotional factors,

appeases peer pressure, enlarges horizons, increases awareness; mental therapy that discharges inner frustration and revolt; self-defense against other people's physical or psychological aggression; detachment from the domineering instinct. It was stressed that estrangement arises from an infinite variety of conflicts caused by divergence of sex, culture, religion, politics, etc., making us strangers to other people and to ourselves.

The problematic of the panel 'Alternativity in Cultural History: Heterarchy and Homoarchy as Evolutionary Trajectories' was determined by the fact that until quite recently, cultural evolution in its sociopolitical aspect has commonly been regarded as the permanent teleological move to a greater level of hierarchy, crowned by state formation. However, recent research based upon the principle of heterarchy (defined as '...the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways' [Ehrenreich *et al.* 1995: 3]) changes the usual picture dramatically. So heterarchy, being the larger frame upon which different hierarchical structures are composed, incorporates hierarchy, even in so-called 'egalitarian' societies. The opposite of heterarchy, then, would be a condition in society when relationships in most contexts are ordered mainly according to one principal hierarchical relationship. This organizational principle may be called 'homoarchy', and this is just what is misleadingly called 'hierarchy' by proponents of the idea of transition from 'egalitarian' to 'non-egalitarian' societies, though even the most primitive societies can be ordered in such a manner. The paper-givers argued that it is time to move away from earlier visions of social evolution. Rather than universal stages, two fundamental forms of dynamic sociopolitical organization cut across standard scholarly 'evolutionary stages': at any level of social complexity, one can find societies organized along both homoarchical and heterarchical lines. Thus, homoarchy and heterarchy represent the most universal principles and basic trajectories of the sociopolitical organization and its evolution. There are no universal evolutionary stages – band, tribe, chiefdom, state – inasmuch as cultures so characterized could be heterarchical or homoarchical: they could be organized differently, while having an equal level of overall social complexity. Papers based on anthropological, archaeological, historical evidence from cultures of differ-

ent periods and geographical areas were presented. There were discussed different mechanisms and factors – social, political, cultural, and so forth – in the formation and transformation of homoarchical and heterarchical societies, including the transformation of one into the other. All these, the panel participants believe, address the possibility of alternativity as well as variability in world history and cultural evolution and adequacy of homoarchy and heterarchy's analysis as the most universal principles and basic trajectories of socio-political organization and its transformations.

The participants in the panel 'Studying Political Centralization Cycles as a Dynamic Process' analyzed dynamic historical processes: population growths and declines, territorial expansion and contraction of states, and centralization and decentralization of political power, affecting all hierarchical macrosystems, from systems of chiefdoms to world empires. The method of explanation of the processes responsible for sociopolitical cycles was an advancing rival hypothesis based on specific mechanisms, translating the hypotheses into mathematical models, and contrasting model predictions with empirical patterns.

The panel 'Art, Struggle, Survival and Change' was designed to explore the interface between the fine/applied arts and the experience of historical struggle (including its political, social, gender, race, civil, national/international aspects). The individual, as well as the collective experience, was sought as an artistic response to differing socio-political (internal and external) stimuli. The panel encouraged papers that dealt with: sculpture, painting, photography, architecture, graphic and poster art, exhibition and gallery priorities, mass media, criticism and all other relevant forms of representation relevant to the fine arts of any historical/cultural period. The aim of the panel was to highlight the duality which can exist between art as a consequence of hierarchical power struggle, war and civil disturbance/art as a mode of creating/implementing hierarchical power struggle, war and civil disturbance.

The participants in the panel 'Hierarchy and Power in Science: An Oxymoron?' explored a highly elitist character of science. Their premise was that scientific elitism is to be observed for example through the different prizes that are instituted in order to instill emulation among scientists. It is to be observed in the competition that exists between institutions of higher knowledge for

recruiting the best individual elements as well. Such factors lead to imbalance in the Republic of Science which goes against the impression that society as a whole may have of the latter's egalitarian nature, and feeds disharmony. The association of scientists with the military was also addressed, as well as the role that scientists are led to play in totalitarian, authoritarian and democratic regimes in a comparative perspective. The problematic of scientific elitism was developed along the lines of the participants' expertise in history, sociology, and anthropology.

Philosophers, anthropologists, historians, and political scientists gave a number of interesting papers at sessions of the 'Free Communication' panel. Their problematic varied from early Christian assumption of terrestrial power to the political role of information flows in the present-day world, and from kingship in precolonial Africa to the current foreign policy of the USA.

To sum up, the Third International Conference 'Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilizations' (as well as the two previous Conferences) was notable for its interdisciplinary character: anthropologists, historians, archaeologists, philosophers, economists, political scientists, experts in many other fields took part in its work. This series of Conferences is essentially important for achieving a breakthrough in understanding the phenomenon of 'hierarchy and power'. Contacts between scholars from different countries and of various schools of thought is another important precondition for achieving this goal which was also fulfilled at the Conference.

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