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North Korea: The Internal Vectors of Existence

Summary

Why has the communist regime not fallen in North Korea? Why has the country not entered the path of reform? And finally, why does the regime not show a greater, even superficial predilection to change and is instead stuck in the old, rigid structures? Most of these questions are answered in this monograph. Its main message is the thesis that North Korea should not be treated as one of many countries of real socialism and the ruling party as a typical communist party.

Since it was created in 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has promoted a system that 'does not easily fit into any conventional political categories' and ideological models known from the past. Today, more than ever before, North Korea is a staggering blend of traditionalism and nationalism, racism and xenophobia, Stalinism and Maoism; additionally thrown on the fertile soil of Confucian–Legalist cultural heritage.

This mixture of internal and external conditions has contributed to the creation of a system that is essentially different from the other contemporary regimes. The situation in North Korea must be subject to constant research, free from schemes and simplification. One must always keep in mind that nothing is obvious in this country and that each process has its second and sometimes even third dimension.

The North Korean system is evolving, but by no means in the direction expected by the free world. The changes are aimed at improving citizen control, increasing isolation and cutting off the country from any news from the outside world. The total terror is also undergoing transformation; it is still brutal and oppressive, but the actions are becoming more chaotic. Sometimes even the most faithful minions are sent to the scaffold for trivial and grotesque offenses, such as 'wry look', 'making wrong faces', yawning and falling asleep in the presence of the leader. Some will say that this is the beginning of the end, that the revolution devours its children and that it is a fairly typical scenario in the history of dictatorships. Historical analogies, however, have little to do with the North Korean reality; what elsewhere would be considered a symptom of the erosion of the dictatorship is often a stabilizer in the DPRK.

Here is the heart of the matter: like many societies in the world, the citizens of North Korea are subjected to violent control and no less brutal terror, but they differ from the other oppressed peoples in that they form a mass that cannot even articulate its real needs, feelings and desires. Here, as anywhere in the world, citizens nationalized to the point of absurdity and welded to the system of social roles do not have many opportunities and often do not want to change something around them – not to mention changes to the system. Perhaps exiting the regime of isolation and enslavement will initiate a process of change that will eventually lead to the fall of this cruellest tyranny of the twenty first century. The authors firmly believe in this.