

SOME HURRY, THE OTHER HASTEN

Usmanov, Boris F., Moscow Humanitarian University, Moscow, Russia.



REVIEW OF THE BOOK: Lapidus, B. M., Lapidus, L. V.
Rail transport: philosophy of the future. Moscow, Prometei publ., 2015, 232 p.

ABSTRACT OF THE BOOK. What should be done for the transport in XXI century, in order that it meets more and more innovative expectations of consumers? Do you believe that in the near future there will be commuter trains- planes, intercontinental overland routes, and the speed of our travels over the ground steps over 1000 km per hour? On the pages of this not fiction book together with the authors we can try to answer the most daring questions, to broaden own attitudes, to get acquainted with breakthrough transport projects and everyday working hypotheses based on actual engineering and economic calculations.

ABSTRACT OF THE REVIEW. The reviewer argues that the form of the presentation chosen by the authors allows to save a flexible boundary between dream-fantasy and a real prospect of development of terrestrial transport, that the book

chapters are indeed solid sections, where in the first case five hypotheses (chapters) are put, the second subtitle «Philosopher's vision for the future» indicates sixteen directions and profiles of the industry development in the global and national context, and in the third, «The future starts today» the innovative trends and future projects are assessed.

In the third chapter (the final chapter), according to the authors, «only a few projects from the world of innovative collection are offered» (p. 178). But they, it should be immediately noted, will certainly be of interest to the reader, since they combine the past and the future of rail transport. The reviewer summing up his impressions, notes integrative and comprehensive features of the book. Written by two doctors of science, it drew the attention not only by uncommon construction of content and form, but also by a deep knowledge of the material.

Keywords: transport, railway, philosophy, economics, information, management, forecasting, innovation, future.

Once at a meeting with friends, one of my fellow singers sitting with a guitar at the table, suddenly sang a phrase, that for some reason forced me to reflexively switch from hot scientific dispute on his song. At first I did not even realize what attracted my attention. Then it came – this was absurd: «On the way to Antarctica / I visited Lida in Yakutsk!» What Antarctica, what Yakutsk [town in the North-East Russia], if you go by train. In short, I began to ask a creative person all sorts of silly questions ... And only now I am aware – I asked them in vain. As students say now, I did «not catch up with the time», I was behind the flight of thought.

Here I read this book and find: «June 2050... the completion of construction of tunnels through the Strait of Gibraltar and Berengo and the Trans-African railway opened a global transport corridor between Cape Town (South Africa) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). For more than 12 thous. km this supercontinental main line passes through the territory of Russia. Today it is hard to imagine that two decades ago, Japan had no overland transport links with the mainland, high-speed railway container line Tokyo– Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk–Moscow–Paris–London, and tourist railway routes Seoul–London, and Tokyo–Montreal–New York simply did not exist. Now world railway systems do not englobe only two continents – Australia and Antarctica» (pp. 14–15).

As far as Antarctica is concerned here everything is suggested like a friend railwayman's dream about it. Putting this pink dream into the preface to their book, the authors of scientific monographs ask a rhetorical question, a tuning fork: will a dream come true?

Actually, this question can preface plots of most titles / chapters of such a multi-valued («philosophical») and promising work. Promising in the literal and figurative sense, as a form of presentation allows to maintain a flexible boundary between dream-fantasy and a real prospect of development of terrestrial transport.

The book is divided into three parts, called chapters, but they are certainly solid sections, where in the first case five hypotheses (chapters) are put, the second subtitle «Philosopher's vision for the future» indicates sixteen directions and profiles of the industry development in the global and national context, and in the third, «The future starts today» the innovative trends and future projects are assessed.

With regard to the hypothesis, the conditional character of the scientific genre here is obvious. Analysis and expectation, anticipation and analysis ... In whatever sequence they were, in whatever form facts and figures were available in book pages, existing up to this day transport progress trends were described, it will be difficult for them to become direct hypotheses until the indicated objects, positions gain a real innovation sense and the proposed projects are able to enter the competition with existing samples of techniques or ways of organizing life.

The thesis is essential as an innovative sense of future changes is also a philosophical sense, ideologically claimed by all great second part of the monograph. But first, let's speak about the hypotheses.

Number one is the promise that «innovative development of modern transport system is impossible without high-speed rail traffic» (p. 17). Further, a global picture is given, with diverse and self-expressive data (what, I note, is characteristic



of the whole book). However, the main thing that confirms the «hypothesis» is a universal economic enthusiasm that turns into a public funding of high-speed railway projects by the regional authorities and governments (as in Japan, for example, or in China). And it should be noted, basing on the text of the book (p. 30), that out-transport, socio-economic effects are most attractive as they contribute to economic growth, and to innovative development of the industry and the state.

Arguments of this kind are probably an indirect proof of correctness of federal investment in the construction of Russian high-speed main lines (especially such lines as Moscow – Kazan, with its promising continuations and political economic effects). However, is there anything hypothetical in the thesis on relationship of innovation development of the transport system with high-speed rail traffic? It is a widely recognized fact, and in my opinion, it is much more significant to raise a question of need and feasibility of consolidating efforts of society (not just the state!) on transport strategic directions, turning them into real national projects. And the role of hypothesis in this case will be played by our common expectations of the most global effects, hints on which should be put in engineering and only then in accounting estimates.

Incidentally, with regard to social economic effects of high-speed rail traffic, they are considered to be «predetermined by speed economy, environmental friendliness of this mode of transport and the solution of the problem of **society sociologization**» (p. 25). It is clear what the authors suppose with highlighted words. It might be admissible to consider that notion by analogy with society technologizing processes, that is equipping of the society and of a human with the best practices and advanced techniques of production, manufacture of consumer goods.

Of course, it is possible that an increase in speed of people movement has meant more rapid transmission of sociological knowledge, expansion of the area of use of scientific methods to study human life in all its manifestations. After all, sociology is a science about society, social processes and phenomena, laws of human behavior. And from this point of view, condemning society to self-study (as a person to self-education) certainly makes sense, while assuming for sociology methods of explaining the real human life and leaving for philosophy abstract sociologism (for what N. I. Bukharin was «condemned» in Soviet times).

Or maybe the problem is seen as an educational mission, designed to raise public consciousness to overcome adversity and the next crisis – here is an occasion to remember a statement of P. A. Sorokin (1920 – before emigration): «Because of our ignorance in the field of social phenomena we still do not know how to deal with disasters, originating in the social life of people»¹. Everybody can have his own associative opinions here, and you can check what is more correct upon reading the book.

However, I would like to think that the term «sociologization» means in this case the most natural form of participation of science in solving the problems of innovative development and progress of society – by educating and training in system methodology, use of socially responsible ways, methods for management of economics, manufacturing and all other sectors of human life, including methods of human settlement, development of new territories and natural resources on the basis of expanding capabilities of modern high-speed transport.

Going along the successive hypotheses from general to specific or from the specific to the general a reader together with the authors passes several problem areas which are in line with global trends. But anyway, they remain linked to the trend of growth of movement speed, as transport system of the future is directly dependent on the e-economy, evolution of information technologies (p. 51), human capital resources (p. 63).

The philosophical vision of the future of rail transport, stated in the second chapter, is realized with support of traditional for the science dialectics, in which the struggle of contradictions (opposites) always prevails. They must be overcome and taken into account in the construction of present transport strategies and various development forecasts. For example, increasing speed and load as the target parameters should be combined with providing comparative energy efficiency, reduction of noise and impact on selected areas of the earth surface. The constant growth of comfort and service requires harmonization with increasing performance and reduction of costs, which again should be taken into account in the formation of social policy in the regions. And this system must still fight with the unsupported efficiency in the operation against rising cost of new generations of engineering and technology (pp. 74–75).

XXI century, the authors point out, dictates the conditions of development, in which there are elements of global economy, information technology, innovative technologies, the role of public institutions is built up, population demands on the volume and quality of services are growing. Proceeding from this philosophy of coming decades may reasonably be regarded as the development philosophy. Guided by it, the railway sector will be developed, suggesting creation of (pp. 79–80): barrier-free, accessible transport environment; multimodal legal and technological basis; priority of safety and punctuality of traffic; competitive services, while reducing their costs and increasing productivity; leading energy efficiency and environmental friendliness. Final position can be associated with achievement of a gradual technological merging with other modes of transport on the basis of structural advantages of trackless version (technological inter-transport convergence).

In the third chapter (the final chapter), according to the authors, «only a few projects from the world of innovative collection are offered» (p. 178). But they, it should be immediately noted, will certainly be of interest to the reader, since they combine the past and the future of rail transport. Not all, I am sure, know about the ball-train of an engineer Yarmolchuk (1932), airtrain on a monorail of Soviet designer Waldner (1933), a train on a magnet suspension, built in Ramenskoye (1985–1986)... There is no sense to recall each of the projects presented in the book, including the future space tram or floating tunnel in the sea strait. I do not have to «persuade» anybody to read this part.

Summing up my impressions, I should note once again compositional features of the book. Written by two doctors of science, it drew the attention by not only the uncommon construction of content and form, but also by very deep knowledge of the material. And some benevolent criticism (and is it really a criticism?) regarding the chapter with hypotheses is not more than my subjective perception of logical structure organizing the monograph. ●

¹ Sorokin, P. A. Public sociology textbook. Yaroslavl, Yaroslavl credit union of cooperatives publ., 1920, p. 19.

Usmanov, Boris F. – D.Sc. (Sociology), professor of Moscow Humanitarian University, Moscow, Russia, +7(499) 374–5061.

Review received 05.01.2016, accepted 12.01.2016.