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## PHILOSOPHY AND IDEOLOGY (To the centenary of the Philosophy Steamer)

Last year (2022) was the centenary of the event symbolically designated the “Philosophy Steamer” – the administrative expulsion abroad of a group of domestic scientists and cultural figures who were purposefully selected according to the criterion of their hostility to the Soviet government and its ideology (in the official language, they were called active counter-revolutionaries and representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia).<sup>2</sup> They were exiled by steamships, including two from Petrograd, specially equipped for this purpose, and among the expelled were famous philosophers (N. A. Berdyaev, S. N. Bulgakov, N. O. Lossky, S. L. Frank, L. P. Karsavin, I. A. Ilyin, F. A. Stepanov, I. I. Lapshin) – hence the genericized designation “Philosophy Steamer” arising retroactively (originally appeared as the name of a large article by S. S. Khoruzhiy in two issues of the Literary Gazette dated 1990<sup>3</sup> that was dedicated to this event). The expulsion was formalized as a lifelong exile from the country (the expelled signed a consent on non-return, so in case of return they faced the firing squad). But, as they say, never say ‘never’: after 65 years (in 1987), the Philosophy Steamer was returned, and this event was already twice symbolic: there were no steamships, there were no more those who could return. Philosophy Steamer became an important category of modern national culture and its centenary was celebrated exactly as such by the country’s public. The very stretching over many decades indicates that we are talking about a single (one) big event of historical scale that has its deep, naturally conditioned social nature.

There is a certain symmetry between the beginning and the end of this event.

The decision to send into emigration (exile from the country) a group of well-known philosophers was undoubtedly a political act – one of the demonstrative actions of the highest authorities taken by the Main Political Directorate under the general and operational leadership of the Politburo of the VKP(b) (All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)) to consolidate ideologically the monopoly of their party Marxist philosophy, and rise it to the state ideology rank.

The return to the names that were once exiled (the removal of state censorship, the need to publish and study their works) began with the resolution of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee dated May 12, 1988 “On the publication of the series ‘From the History of Russian Philosophical Thought’”. The note attached by A. N. Yakovlev,

in particular, said that “for various reasons, a whole array of philosophical works has been forgotten that would honor the culture of any European country... A long period of ‘silencing’ led to negative results,”<sup>4</sup> in the list of philosophers’ names whose works were recommended for publication, passengers of the Philosophy Steamer were also included, the works were commissioned to be prepared by the magazine “Questions of Philosophy”, and published by the party publishing house “Pravda”. It is the legalization and even the accentuated stimulation of the forbidden creativity of the once exiled philosophers that gives this Resolution an undoubtedly political character and allows to consider its date the official date of the Philosophy Steamer return.

As far as I know, this Resolution, which opened the way for the return of the creativity (works) of the Philosophy Steamer passengers, has not been studied in as much detail and particularly as the preparation and implementation of their exile, about which we know why this exile occurred, who personally inspired and organized it, how it was occurring, etc. Perhaps future generations will need such research to understand its real meaning, but for us, people who were in the philosophical environment in these years, there was no need for this, since the real meaning of this Resolution was no secret. There stood behind it the suppressed discontent of minds who were burdened by the narrow limits of party ideology and who wanted to break out into the free space of independent thinking. Its social effect can be likened to the effect of water pressure breaking through the sluices standing in its way.

The Philosophy Steamer return was not as open and demonstrative as the act of exile, it was covered up by the desire to inform better of “the reasonability and justification of Bolsheviks policy and ideology.”<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, as subsequent events showed, it was understood by the humanitarian community as an actual recognition that the Philosophy Steamer was a mistake and that the state expelled philosophy as a free human activity together with philosophers on the steamer. Social status of national philosophy was changed dramatically by the rapid filling of the blank pages.

1. The Philosophy Steamer considered as a single historical event and an integral social phenomenon, can be considered as a real scientific experiment that reveals the nature of the relationship between philosophy and ideology, more precisely, as an answer to the question of to what extent philosophy can be risen to the state ideology rank.

As for the public meaning of the very idea of exile a certain group of philosophers from the country, why and how it happened, everything is clear.<sup>6</sup> Philosophers were ex-

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<sup>2</sup> This event is analyzed in detail in the work: *Главацкий М. Е. «Философский пароход»: год 1922-й. Историографические этюды.* Екатеринбург: УрГУ, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> *Хоружий С. С. Философский пароход. Как это было? // Литературная газета. 1990. 9 мая, 6 июня.*

<sup>4</sup> Александр Яковлев. Перестройка: 1985–1991. Неизданное, малоизвестное, забытое. 1988 год. [Док. № 29–56]. Документ № 36. Постановление Политбюро ЦК КПСС и записка А. Н. Яковлева об издании серии «Из истории отечественной философской мысли». URL: <https://alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1023684> (accessed: 31.05.2023).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> “Thus, with some dispersed opinions, researchers of the history of expulsion are unanimous that the expatriation of the dissident intelligentsia in 1922 was a logical step in the country’s domestic policy development. Its main reason can be called an attempt by the authorities to establish strict ideological control by removing the intellectual elite from the country – those people who could think freely, independently analyze the situation and

pelled as people whose fault, whether voluntary or involuntary, was that they did not share Marxist views and did not endorse the new authorities. And these very authorities exiled them.<sup>1</sup> The real result of the Philosophy Steamer was the reorganization of the nature of philosophy activity that had two interrelated directions: a) the exclusion from the officially sanctioned public country space of all philosophical trends, except Marxist-Leninist; b) systematic, carried out with varying success, but always contradictory practical measures to rise this very only direction considered true to the state ideology rank<sup>2</sup> (by the way, among these measures, one of the most important was considered to be the compilation of an integral and popular corpus, a kind of catechism, a correct understanding of the correct philosophy). The Politburo resolution dated May 12, 1988 turned the movement in the opposite direction: it was the beginning of shift away from Marxism monopoly in the country, and eventually from the state ideology in general. It actually lifted the ban on those names and works on which it was imposed in 1922.

The first, most obvious and important consequence of it was the newly found philosophical pluralism of public life in Russia. This meant that the experiment result was negative. But it seems that this is the case when a negative result takes a special value.

2. Even at the end of Soviet power, as the ideological pressure were weakened, philosophical doctrines were formed in the country that fell out of its official canon and nevertheless became points of public intellectual attraction. It is enough to mention the names of outstanding thinkers A. F. Losev, M. M. Bakhtin, methodologist G. P. Shchedrovitsky. As the Russian philosophy of the Silver Age has been 'rehabilitated' their own associations were formed quickly and spontaneously around the names and doctrines of many of its outstanding representatives, V. V. Rozanov, P. A. Florensky, N. A. Berdyaev, L. Shestov and others.

I must say especially about the return of Soviet philosophers who were expelled in the 70s, among them, first of all, about the unique Russian thinker Alexander Alexandrovich Zinoviev, whose 100th anniversary we celebrated last year at the state level as a national event. In recent years, the domestic humanitarian environment has been replenished with new socially significant philosophical ideas and names claiming their own philosophical concepts: V. V. Bibikhin, V. A. Podoroga, V. S. Stepin, S. S. Khoruzhiy, etc. In a word, the modern philosophical horizon is colorful and multicolor.

Pluralism as an ideological multidirectionality of philosophical systems and doctrines is the normal state of philosophy, which is a product of free thought; it (at least its possibility) is a condition for a healthy mental atmosphere. There is no philosophy in general, it is always an author's work. Speaking about philosophy, we always specify whose

philosophy it is – Descartes, Kant's, Chernyshevsky's, Marx's, etc. Hence – pluralism as its standard.

But it (pluralism) is a problem for philosophy. Philosophy is not only names and schools, it is also the self-consciousness of society, the expression of the spirit of times, of the epoch. It, especially as the purest product of the mind, is created by individuals, living individuals, not by its content it embraces the existence of people and the world in its most general form, in their first principles. This means that philosophy expresses the civilizational perspective of the people, their ability to orient themselves in the family of other peoples. Thus, Russian philosophy has always been concerned with the question of the ideal image of Russia, its place in history. In this aspect, in an effort to express the spirit of the epoch, time, the spirit of their society, their people, each philosophy strives to become their common denominator, a form of social consciousness that binds the conscious activity of people. Every society and every nation develops its own philosophy as they rise to the level of their own vision of historical development. Also the very state of philosophy, as Descartes wisely noted, is a sign of their civilization.

The national idea of philosophy can be difficult to reconcile with the pluralism of philosophical doctrines. The issue is not solved by creating social conditions so that each of the philosophical doctrines can develop freely within its own school and its followers. Some kind of solution is required, by which the pluralism of philosophical doctrines itself would be a necessary form of philosophical self-consciousness of society, at least, would not become an obstacle to this. Pluralism of philosophical doctrines (interests, schools) can exist in different forms. It can exist as a simple variety of philosophical doctrines when they are just side by side, are nearby. It may remain a superficial phenomenon or even become a source of loss of mental independence. But the pluralism of philosophical doctrines can also be their diversity within a single one: this happens when they represent different answers to the same general questions that concern the whole society, all its thinking representatives. In this case, philosophical doctrines turn out to be internally interconnected by those common themes and problems that are of interest to society as a whole, and not only for supporters of a particular doctrine. These common themes and problems are set not by philosophy, but by the history of the people themselves, its critical landmarks, major social events such as reforms, wars, the change of elites – events that unite large masses of people into certain groups (parties), sharpen reflections on the future. They are formulated by politicians, thought leaders, people authorized to speak on behalf of the state, to give people a certain course of action. Philosophy also finds these common themes and problems that concern people and society, and they find their expression and reflection in it, are translated into its 'bird' language, receive a diverse conceptual embodiment and create a new field of ideas. Thus, the pluralism of philosophical doctrines becomes a single polemical space, a kind of national round table.

3. Then finally we have a few conclusions about what we can learn from experience of the Philosophy Steamer.

The first conclusion concerns the common and different between philosophy and ideology.

Philosophy and ideology objectively have something in common: both are forms of consciousness that answer the

express their ideas, and often criticize the existing regime" (*Главацкий М. Е. Оп. cit. C. 24*).

<sup>1</sup> Here is an excerpt from Berdyaev's interrogation: "Question. Tell please, citizen Berdyaev, what are your views on the Soviet power structure and on the proletarian state system. Answer. According to my convictions, I cannot take a class standpoint and equally consider the ideology of the nobility, the ideology of the peasantry, the ideology of the proletariat, and the ideology of the bourgeoisie to be narrow, limited and self-serving" (*Главацкий М. Е. Оп. cit. C. 166–167*).

<sup>2</sup> In more detail about this, see: *Гусейнов А. А. Философия и общество. К 100-летию Института философии РАН // Вестник РАН. 2021. Т. 91, № 8. С. 779–793.*

question of the fundamental principles of conscious human activity.

There are also differences between philosophy and ideology that in their significance of the essential characteristics of each of them are revealed precisely when they are understood as differences. They come down to two important points.

A) The subject of philosophy is every living intelligent individual, since he strives to live intelligently; the subject of ideology are large groups (classes) of people, since they strive to arrange intelligently their common (joint) life.

B) Philosophy in society as a professional occupation always exists in the plural; philosophers, since they themselves are living intelligent individuals, offer each their own understanding of the issue they are dealing with, arguing and publicly presenting it as the best, and therefore they are similar in this respect to such masters of their craft as, for example, jewelers and poets; ideology, on the contrary, always assumes the singular, since it is designed to ensure the unity of action of a large number of people, so there cannot be many of it, as there cannot be, for example, many emperors in the empire, generals in the army, leaders in an institution.

The second conclusion: this experience reveals the temptations inherent in philosophy and ideology.

Based on objectively determined coincidences and differences between philosophy and ideology as two forms of social consciousness, they cannot but reach out to each other and not just reach out, but not encroach on the sovereignty of the other, on its substitution. Each philosophy, in its content definiteness, claims to consider itself the only true one. Even when it recognizes itself as one of the skeptical (anti-dogmatic) versions, it presents this skepticism itself as a universal doctrine. In this sense, it seeks to become an ideology for all people. Plato's utopian experience described by him in the "State" and "Laws", can be considered the eternal temptation of philosophy. Ideology in its modern secular version, which, in fact, it gained together with its name after the Great French Revolution, represents an irrational-rational construction where the driving irra-

tional core is hidden deep behind a rational shell. And to the extent that, along with rhetorical, aesthetic and other points, ideology uses the arsenal of rational cognition, namely, formulates the value principles of collective consciousness and gives its content a strict formal and logical form, it inevitably appeals to philosophy. The desire to become a philosophy is the temptation of ideology.

The third conclusion: following these temptations is destructive for both philosophy and ideology. Soviet society, taken from the beginning of its heroic development to its catastrophic destruction, can be considered a colossal experiment carried out on the basis of and in accordance with the philosophy of Marx and Engels, the supporter of which was the Communist Party that won the Russian Revolution of 1917: this philosophy was considered by this party to be the only scientific, absorbing everything valuable that humanity has accumulated in philosophy. The task was to build the most advanced society, the general goals and contours of which were substantiated in Marxism-Leninism doctrines. To do this, it was necessary to raise this doctrine into a state ideology, so that it would become a program that gathers together and directs the activities of the whole society towards common goals. So Marxism-Leninism, based on the philosophy of dialectical materialism, was elevated to the ideological canon and the common faith of the whole society, supported by the necessary political, educational, institutional and other changes. In particular, it was necessary to clear (by prohibition, expulsion) the public space from all other philosophical theories as from unnecessary garbage. The start of this purification process was the Philosophy Steamer. It was precisely the 'fusion' of philosophy and ideology, the transformation of the former into a mandatory, state-controlled force and the filling of the latter with secular rational content. The negative outcome of this experiment turned out to be destructive both for the national philosophy and for the ideological life of the country. The return to philosophical pluralism and the rejection of state ideology are doubtless proofs of this. The question of how, with what costs, losses and distortions one thing happened, and the other thing is another question.