

MARX AND RUSSIA

Any individual living in Russia cannot ignore the image of Marx and the Marxist theory, and that refers not only to professional research of it by philosophers, economists or lawyers, because it was tried to realize Marxism in one of its guises at the level of real political practice and the mainstream ideology of our country. There is hardly any other social theory honoured with such attention and spreading in thinkers' minds. At the same time, fluctuations in understanding and interpretation of Marxism in our country were probably one of the biggest. Even Marx as a person is either a hero image or an evil trickster for the Russian consciousness.

This can be to a large extent explained by domineering ideocratic consciousness in the Russian society that was very long ago presented by F. Tyutchev's in his high-capacity formula according to which "it's impossible to understand Russia with your mind, you can only believe in it", which sinks into the consciousness of our people already during the growing-up period at school. The ideocratic consciousness is based on belief in the idea as such, and because of that a perceived philosophical theory here also acquires a fetishist character. It is treated not as a conceptual model but as some God-given system of recipes for restructuring the social order. It's necessary to fall in love with such model nearly sensually. The Marxist theory and Marx as a person experienced that to a great extent.

It's not surprising that the atheist theory of Marxism was a kind of religion for many of its supporters in Russia, it was rejected as a state ideology but it is seen exactly in this guise today by many of its followers¹. The leaders of the

¹ It's not accidental that the leaders of the Communist Party of our country regularly emphasize the closeness of the Communist system of values and the Russian Orthodox system of values. For example, it is said about that in the major policy article by G. Zyuganov "Communism and Orthodoxy". "The sacred duty of Communists and the Russian Orthodox Church is to unite our multi-national people on the basis of common traditional values of kindness, justice, collectivism, mutual help and high spirituality". (See e-source: <http://newsland.com/community/5392/content/sviatoi-dolg-kommunistov-i-russkoi-pravoslavnoi-tserkvi/5772752>)

Communist Party of our country regularly emphasize the closeness of the Communist system of values and the Russian Orthodox system of values, ignoring the principally atheistic contents of both Marxism and Marxism-Leninism as the main theoretical sources of the theory of scientific Communism.

The ideocratic consciousness deforms the real perception of people's behaviour in practice, no matter if in the spheres of politics or economy, which were always evaluated first of all from the ideological positions or were just a projection of this or that ideological pattern. "Bringing Marx's ideas into life" in our country became a kind of a fairly original interpretation of Marxism and "made in the USSR state system corresponded to Marx's model of socialism no more than the society of ancient Mesopotamia. Really, the variant of the described by Marx "Asiatic mode of production" was realized in our country under the banner of socialism"². Really, the variant of the described by Marx "Asiatic mode of production" was realized in our country under the banner of socialism"³. Many fundamental Marx's provisions as if used by their adepts, were in practice realized the other way round: social being according to Marx was to determine social consciousness but it turned out to be the realization of ideas themselves and society building according to some ideological pattern, in which "Marx's basis and superstructure change places in a sense – it's not the power that is the function of ownership, but on the contrary, ownership is the function of power. The consequence of such arrangement is a hypertrophic statehood, identical to the lack of a civil society"⁴. This always stayed the ground for stating the special messianic role of Russia, for which it was possible to sacrifice the present, for the happy

² Momdzhyan K.Kh. Social Philosophy. Active Approach to Analysis of the Man, Society, History. Part 1. Moscow University Press, 2013. P. 22

³ Momdzhyan K.Kh. Social Philosophy. Active Approach to Analysis of the Man, Society, History. Part 1. Moscow University Press, 2013. P. 22

⁴ Momdzhyan K.Kh. The Anthropologic Aspect of Russian Uniqueness // Ethnos, Nation, Values: Social and Philosophical Studies / Academic editors K.Kh. Momdzhyan, A.Yu. Antonovsky. Moscow. Canon+, 2015, p. 145-146

future, and that served the basis of the official ideology. Such ideocratic consciousness is convenient for politicians as manipulating means.

The ideocratic society in the sense of the state structure always strives for polarism, when state structures bring to heel the civil society. And it's fairly natural that the interpretation of power proceeding from it is the power that is necessarily tied with the leader as its personification⁵.

It's surprising that the image of Marx got into Russia as a hero image, when Marx's attitude to our country was, to say the least, controversial and even, more likely, negative. This was hardly the product of primitive Russophobia (as it is sometimes thought) but the manifestation of the social and class approach, following which allowed to come to conclusions about the reactionary monarchical system in the Russian Empire in the middle of the 19th century. And these conclusions often acquired a personal character affecting the Russians, who crossed with Marx in this or that way.

Marx writes in one of his letters to Kugelmann: "This is the irony of fate: the Russians with whom I incessantly fought for 25 years in my speeches not only in German but also in French and in English, have always been my "benefactors"..."⁶. At the same time, Marx was the secretary of the Russian section of the International, he learnt the Russian language, quoted Pushkin, there were very many various representatives of Russian intelligentsia among people with whom Marx dialogued. In the last years of his life Marx especially and very carefully worked at the problem of a possibility of movement to socialism for not the most advanced economically countries, Russia in particular.

The list of people, to whom Marx was not indifferent, included great and well-known people, including in Europe. For example, Marx was acquainted with M. A. Bakunin since 1844. Here is how Bakunin remembers that: "However, we were never fully frank with each other. Our temperaments did not stand each other.

⁵ See: Momdzhyan K.Kh. Introduction to Social Philosophy. Moscow: Higher School, University Book House, 1997. P. 27

⁶ Marx to Louis Kugelmann, October 12, 1868.// Collected Works. Second edition. V. 32. Moscow.1964. P. 472

He called me a sentimental idealist, and he was right; I called him a perfidious and secretive vain man; and I was also right”⁷. Relations of Marx and Gertsen were no less important; Marx also appraised him negatively and critically in many cases, calling “a Socialist in words only”. We have to give him his due: Gertsen did not leave the favour unanswered either, calling Marx followers “Marxides”⁸, in which a Russian word meaning “nits”, which is a swear-word in Russian, is recognized. At the same time, Marx sympathized with many Russian revolutionary democrats (let’s name Lavrov, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, Zasulich). Lopatin was honoured with the biggest sympathy, Marx writes about him: “He is the only “imposing” Russian among all those I have met till now, and I’ll soon knock out national prejudices from him”⁹.

Relation to Marx in Russia was also somewhat original. The authorities of the Imperial Russia entered Marx’s name in the list of those who were to be immediately arrested if they came to Russia, starting from 1844. Starting from the same time, the authorities regularly ordered to fight against Communist ideas in every possible way. At the same time, some theoretical works by Marx and, first of all *Capital*, were allowed by censors (most likely because of their ignorance) and were legally published. *The Poverty of Philosophy* was published in Russia in 1848 and the translated *Capital* was published in 1873. And announcements about publication of translations were placed in governmental newspapers.

Thus, we see that Marxism and its founder were often perceived in Russia via fascination brought up to “falling in love”, which is on the whole very typical for Russian intelligentsia. However, exactly that is the source of nearly sensual disappointment. The rather simplified and originally interpreted version of Marxism was turned into an inviolable canon in the Soviet period and became not

⁷ **Gennady Murikov. *Bakunin’s Paradoxes (To the 200th anniversary of M.A. Bakunin)* E-source:**
<http://www.topos.ru/article/ontologicheskie-progulki/paradoksy-bakunina-k-200-letiyu-ma-bakunina-0>

⁸ See: A.I. Gertsen. *The Erstwhile and the Thoughts*. In three volumes. Volume two. Fiction State Publishing House. Moscow, Leningrad 1931. P. 399

⁹ Marx to Engels, August 3, 1870.// *Collected Works*. Second edition. V. 33. P. 24

only the thrust upon from the top attribute of any social scientific research or a textbook but also the basis for official ideology.

The ideology, brought to the level of universal, requires its own symbols and rituals, acting in essence as mythology coupled with artful colouring of the symbols it pronounces. In case of most people it requires not knowledge but belief in it. Marx was turned into one of the main symbols of the said ideology, which was elaborated depending on the time and section of the public consciousness.

It's possible to give a lot of variants of such mythological constructions but it's enough to remember the myth about two Marxes. On the one hand, *official Marx*, whose ideas were widely promoted and taught at schools and higher educational establishments. On the other hand, *unread and unknown Marx*, who did not fit in the Marxist-Leninist ideology. The philosophy of that period is recognized to be relatively “*immature*”, overfilled with humanistic and existential motives. The myth separating two Marxes was very popular in the circles of teachers and students. Knowledge of “the second Marx” became a kind of sign of intellectual freedom; *this Marx was loved in the circles of humanitarian intelligentsia.*

These sentiments with positive attitude to Marx were keenly felt by Yu.V. Andropov in his time, when he became the General Secretary in the environment when there was some danger to lose control over the ideology, to be more exact the part of intelligentsia that was to support it theoretically. The main conceptual thesis in the popular then policy essay in the *Communist* magazine was the appeal to “return” to the true scientific social theory. It was acknowledged that the theoretical basis of the preceding ideology did not fully correspond to “the true Marx”. And it was hinted at the same time that fairly intelligent people had come to power, and they know the true Marx. Marxism later becomes the ideological basis for launching reforms in the initial period of the Perestroika (restructuring), when they started speaking about socialism with a human face.

It became clear *from the beginning of the 1990s* that building the society “with a human face” was delayed and the life of people was worsening more and

more. It was required to find a person of authority, who could be blamed for all sins and misfortunes. There was just no more convenient figure than Marx, and yesterday's Prometheus becomes ideological Frankenstein. There is a switch from love to hatred. The contents of educational courses at universities and even schools change, departments are closed, teachers are retrained. One of the most amazing phenomena of the early 1990s is nearly momentarily (taking place over several years and sometimes months) transformation of adepts of Marxist philosophy, political economy, etc. into scholars and teachers developing ideas, which are rather far from Marxism, and in some cases also actively rejecting Marxism. And what is more, the thesis of Marx's and Marxism's responsibility for all failures of Russian economy and problems in social life becomes nearly universal.

Today we are having another round of "returning to Marx".

First, it turned out that Marx suits exactly to characterize the capitalism realized in Russia as he was right in a lot of things. Russia as if brought back the image of early capitalism to the international arena, with all its flaws, exposed by Marx. Its characteristics are growth of material inequality, which in the environment of specific Russian oligarchic capitalism reached fantastic sizes.

Second, the Marx's theory actualized in the West as well, as after the collapse of socialism there was a kind of peculiar return to the patterns of classical capitalism, no matter that it is now tied with the latest technologies, about which Marx had no idea.

Third, failures of neoliberal economic policy became the basis for revival of interest to Marxism. "Radical democracy" of the European type does not work properly in Russia. People are tired of social experiments according to the "Chicago boys" models, i.e. the real contradictions of socioeconomic life started creating prerequisites for revival of creatively reconsidered Marxism.

When objectively appraising the Marx's theory, it's necessary to remember that it is not only an economic and social concept, but also a philosophical one. It means that it can't be judged by the standards of only certain scientific theories, the semantic space of which is set forth by the subject frames. A philosophical concept

includes not only components of rational understanding of the world but it is also associated with value judgments about it. Here the notion of truth is not domineering and the philosophical approach itself is in essence reflection over the ultimate grounds of being, including social being. And the Marx's theory in this respect is one of the deepest reflections relating to the society, humans, culture as a whole. At the same time, it is the product of its era, i.e. it fixed self-consciousness in itself at a certain stage of culture's development.

The Marx's concept as a certain scientific theory is a priori idealized model, i.e. gnosiological interpretation of being, the world, real relations. It has a giant number of true conclusions. But as the Newton's theory did not use the notion of spatial-temporal continuum or a possibility of the ultimate characteristic of the speed of light, the classical Marxist theory has a number of limitations and works within the framework of certain gnosiological prerequisites. But if it does not come to our mind to accuse the Newton's theory of being false because something is differently explained in the Einstein's theory, this becomes common in case of the Marx's theoretical model. This is the fate of all social theories as their conclusions in case of practical realization refer to the society and certain people.

Marxism goes on developing as a social theory. It answers scientific criteria in a lot of aspects but as any theory it requires corrections and supplements, it has its merits and flaws, it contains false statements together with true, historically verified statements. The Marx's concept gradually becomes a part of the general integral social theory, being a relatively united thematic space, and scientific hypotheses by E. Durkheim, M. Weber, P. Sorokin, T. Parsons, etc. can serve the borders of it, interacting and supplementing each other.

It is possible to single out a number of Marx's ideas, which can get impulses for their development today. First of all, this is the complex of philosophical and anthropological ideas related to understanding humans as creatures transforming the world. The idea of the future integrated mankind outlined by Marx, and this is the idea deduced from the course of the society's development and the necessity for it to behave as a united mankind for its self-preservation. Marx's ideas about

the special value of an individual, whose interests can be higher than other, including class interests, are worth looking at.