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Marxism in the modern world: social-philosophical analysis *El marxismo en el mundo moderno: análisis socio-filosófico*

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ABSTRACT

The paper concentrates on resolving the question: is it possible today to be guided by Marxism as an instrument of social transformation, is this teaching capable of contributing to social advancement? Facts are a stubborn thing: Marxism in its completeness is refuted. But the fact of the collapse of the attempts to put Marxism into practice is not a completely convincing argument against the social doctrine of Marx. The question, ultimately, goes back to the problem of the subjective factor of the moral, theoretical, and political maturity of those who turn Marxism in actual practice.

Keywords: Marxism as a Dogma, Marxism as a Practice, Marxism and Revisionism, The Social Philosophy of Marxism.

RESUMEN

El documento se concentra en resolver la pregunta: ¿es posible hoy ser guiado por el marxismo como instrumento de transformación social? ¿es esta enseñanza capaz de contribuir al avance social? Los hechos son obstinados: el marxismo en su integridad es refutado. Pero el hecho del colapso de los intentos de poner en práctica el marxismo no es un argumento completamente convincente contra la doctrina social de Marx. La cuestión, en última instancia, se remonta al problema del factor subjetivo de la madurez moral, teórica y política, de quienes transforman el marxismo en la práctica real.

Palabras clave: El marxismo Como Dogma, El Marxismo Como Práctica, El Marxismo y El Revisionismo, La filosofía social Del marxismo.

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INTRODUCTION

In the work *Three Sources and Three Components of Marxism*, V.I. Lenin states about the omnipotence of Marxism, which he proves by fidelity to it (Lenin: 1973). There is an absolute conviction of the author and his supporters in the correctness of Marx's teachings in this statement, which allowed them to make the socialist revolution in Russia. Nevertheless, attempts to refute Marxism have never stopped (its social component is a case in point). They especially intensified after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the entire socialist community. The situation of the Communists today, to put it mildly, is unenviable. Their electorate which has considerably thinned and greatly aged does not allow them to go into the offensive. In the arena of the political struggle of Europe, Asia, America, and even Russia, the voice of the Communists is practically inaudible. They are not only in ideological and political defense but, more important for our study is that they are in theoretical defense (today, perhaps, the figure of S. Zhizhek keeps somewhat aloof; he, with all the critical attitude to Marx, does not cease to see the force of his teachings (Zhizhek: 2009; Zhizhek: 2019). It is reasonable that some doubts are cast upon the validity and omnipotence of Marxism and, therefore, the more urgent is the need to ask again and again the question of how much it is justified.

1. MATERIAL AND METHODS

For a reasoned demonstration of their standpoints the authors used, first of all, the method of the ascent from the general through the special to the unitary and the method of logical and historical unity (AS: 2016). Their use allows (as the authors believe), on the one hand, to get away from the schematization and dogmatization of the socio-philosophical representations of Marxism, and on the other, to see its capabilities in the mirror of modern realities.

To settle doubts, we believe that it is essential to consistently answer at least the following questions: what does the correctness of Marxism mean? How to understand its "omnipotence"?

Since the authors begin their research with a quote, the explicitation of the meaning that V. I. Lenin himself intended in this expression would be logical. The first quite obvious conclusion to which a close reading of the whole work and the quoted phrase in the context of the rest of the text of Leninist work leads is that the correctness of Marxism is meant its adequacy to social realities. In other words, Marxism (in the opinion of the author of the utterance) is not an overactive imagination of its author, it is an ideal reflection of material reality (Demmerling: 2017). An analysis of contemporary bourgeois social relations based on the highest achievements of human thought in explaining the course of social development in the person of classical German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism allowed Marx to draw a fundamental conclusion about the historically transient nature of capitalism.

Moreover, the contradiction between productive forces and production relations as the driving spring of social change (ultimately) in any socio-economic formation, with the inevitability and necessity, will require, in his opinion, the transformation of capitalism into communism. The essence of the matter is that under capitalism, the increasing social capital personified in capitalism is increasingly opposing the producers of this capital – the working class as an alien, enslaving force. Expressing the increasing socialization of production, social capital comes into conflict with the power of private owners – capitalists. From the point of view of Marxism, this contradiction can only be resolved by the revolutionary transformation of the conditions of production into universal, collective, own conditions of production. And, which is fundamentally important, this transformation "... is determined by the development of productive forces under capitalist production and the way this development is accomplished" (Marx: 1987).

2. RESULTS

Since the founders of Marxism lived and worked, capitalism has undergone such bizarre metamorphoses that it seems to be outdated as a way of reproducing social relations. Nevertheless, it is not only the main way of social being in the modern world, but also remains unchanged in its essence: the growing social capital personified in the capitalist, as in ancient times, is opposed to those who create it. Many interrelated indicators prove this statement. An integrating indicator demonstrating this fact is, to a large extent, the growing financial and economic stratification of the world's population: for example, in Russia, 1% of the richest people in the country own 56% of its wealth, in the USA, 1% of this population belongs to 38% of the wealth of the state, in Germany – 32%, in Canada – 26%, France – 22%, etc. On a global scale, 1% of its richest people over the 15 years of the 21st century have equalized their well-being with the total well-being of the rest of the Earth's population (Experts have recognized inequality in Russia comparable to 1905; Davies, & Sandström: 2008; Zinchenko: 2015). An unambiguous conclusion follows from this – Marxism adequately reflects the nature of capitalism and, therefore, as a social doctrine, it is true in principle. It is in this regard that the position of Marxism is unshakable.

One more thing to bear in mind: a) since it never aspired and does not strive for such a correspondence with the reality that religious teachings claim (they, by their status, aspire to an absolutely exhaustive explanation of being), so any attempts to correct/supplement it must be treated accordingly; b) from here the assertion about the omnipotence of Marxism takes on concrete outlines – it is valid where social relations are governed by the contradiction between the social character of labor and the private capitalist appropriation of its results. In addition, none of the doctrines, however adequate to reality, is automatically realized. Even when the theory takes hold of the minds of billions of people, there is no mirror coincidence between it and social reality itself, since the theory is turned by people into practice. And, therefore, the question of who and where, when and how is based on Marxism in order to influence social processes is quite natural (Lichtheim: 2015).

In principle, the answer to this question was given by the founders of Marxism as follows: a) the proletarian movement should be led by the Communist Party b) the party is structurally divided into leadership (party leaders) and party masses (ordinary party members); c) inner-party life is built on the principles of democracy, camaraderie, criticism, and self-criticism (Marx: 1969). Compliance with the provisions of the last paragraph in real time and space was difficult and, often, was very dramatic. There was practically no time in the history of the international communist movement when the thought of R. Michels about the “iron law of the oligarchy” which negated the principles of democratic governance of inner-party life, was not confirmed (Michels: 1991). And, as a result, the practice of communist transformations mainly demonstrated two mutually exclusive approaches to solving this problem: dogmatic and subjective-voluntaristic. The first approach required a mechanical, uncritical attitude to Marxism as a guide to action, chastising, arguing that one was correct by quoting certain provisions from the works of the classics of Marxism, and any attempt to creatively use it was declared revisionism, renegade (Kitching: 2015).

Perhaps the only exception concerned the leaders of the party, and even then during their lifetime, since after death, their contribution to the theory and practice of socialism, as a rule, was subjected to revision and obstruction. The embodiment of literalism (if you will – Marxist fundamentalism) in the history of the USSR was the theory of proletarian culture, political and legal infringement, and even the persecution of citizens of non-proletarian and peasant origin, rejection of the new economic policy (NEP proposed in exchange for the policy of military communism), Stalinism, and even practice of naming people (Exchange: 2019).

The manifestations of the second approach in the practice of Soviet socialism are vividly demonstrated by the activities of party leaders: almost every new leader of the CPSU (this applies, in fact, to any Communist Party) was regarded as the coming of Christ to Earth – his figure was deified. However, just as in the first case, as long as he held power. Perhaps only V. I. Lenin, whose personality scale is so unique that the appearance of such is unlikely, managed to adhere to Marxism, creatively applying it in practice. And, since

the collective leadership of social transformations is essentially a fiction, the question arises as to the possibility of being guided by the spirit and letter of Marxism (Blyukher: 2018).

CONCLUSION

The social theory of Marxism is based on the recognition of the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private capitalist way of appropriating the results of labor as such to require the rejection of capitalism by communism. In other words, all other contradictions of the bourgeois socio-economic formation are sequent. According to the authors' well-reasoned opinion, this social project is still adequate to the social conditions of life, therefore, it is true and relevant. It also follows that all other methods of solving (non-Marxist social projects) of this contradiction are pseudo-solutions because they do not eliminate the main thing – the exploitation of man by man (Rigauer: 2000).

However, the success of the implementation of the Marxist social project in such dependence on the maturity (moral, theoretical, political, strong-willed) of the performers that a return to the practice of communism in the foreseeable future, in our opinion, is not expected. The reason is, first of all, the features of modern civilization among which the most important, in our opinion, are the following: a) material values not only dominate spiritual ones in it – worship of them has become the meaning of people's existence; it is a society of social training in consumption, i.e. an almost completely new and specific way of socialization (Baudrillard: 1998); b) the possibility of purposeful management of information flows and, thereby, endarkening people by the media has reached unprecedented proportions: today one is ahead who wins the struggle for the minds of people (Marx: 1970; Khaziev et al.: 2015; Khazieva et al.: 2017).

Anyway, when we discuss the foreseeable communist perspective, we proceed (voluntarily or involuntarily) from recognizing the existing social conditions of life as sustainable so that we tend to consider them practically eternal. However, one ought to bear in mind that the development of society is carried out not only linearly, but also synergistically. In addition, the reasons for the planetary scale may demand it as a universal need, making it impossible at least in a single country.

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