

Philosophy of Culture of Russian Marxism: Basic Ideas and Concepts

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Abstract—The philosophy of Marxism had a particularly tangible impact on the Russian philosophical and socio-political thought of the end of the XIX century. Among the many Marxist constructions in the culture philosophy field, works of G.V. Plekhanov, A.A. Bogdanov, M.N. Pokrovsky, A.V. Lunacharsky, I.I. Joffe, F.I. Schmidt, and N.N. Punin are highlighted. The reader is offered a comparative analysis of the understanding of the phenomenon of culture in various currents of "Russian Marxism". The article analyzes the philosophical and cultural ideas of G.V. Plekhanov as the theoretical foundation of the Marxist concept of culture, as well as the philosophical and cultural views of V.I. Lenin, which had a decisive influence on the development of the Marxist science of culture.

Keywords—Marxism; ideology; culture; theory of reflection; style; sociologizing

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of Russian philosophical thought is closely and organically linked with the development of philosophy in Western Europe. If in the 1st half of the XIX century the philosophical ideas of F. Schelling, G. Hegel, and L. Feuerbach had a strong influence on Russian thought, then, starting from the 2nd half, the ideas of symbolism, Nietzscheanism, neo-Kantianism, and phenomenology of E. Husserl begin to enter into Russia. All this is in no way indicative of the secondary Russian philosophical thought, as all European influence and impact are not purely external, they are refracted through the Russian spiritual necessities of life, and the works of Russian thinkers not satisfied with philosophical import. In turn, the Russian thought (especially L.N. Tolstoy and F.M. Dostoevsky) has a significant influence on European intellectual life.

II. CULTURE AS AN ORIENTATION FOR CREATIVITY

Particularly significant impact on the Russian socio-political and philosophical thought of the late XIX century has a philosophy of Marxism, which is largely manifested through the economic and socio-political teachings of K. Marx and F. Engels [1]. The peculiarity of Marxism in the Russian land is what is commonly called "Russian communism". However, during this period, Marxism in Russia exists not only in the Bolshevik version. The Bolsheviks are fiercely fighting both representatives of the

"legal Marxism" and its "Menshevik" variety represented by G.V. Plekhanov, as well as philosophical revisionism, among whose supporters one can mention the name of the forerunner of cybernetics A.A. Bogdanov [2].

Among the many Marxist constructions in the culture philosophy field highlight works of G.V. Plekhanov, A.A. Bogdanov, M.N. Pokrovsky, A.V. Lunacharsky, I.I. Joffe, F.I. Schmidt, and N.N. Punin.

In the philosophy of culture as a whole, Marxism proceeds from the axiomatic acceptance of the objective nature of the course of events in culture. "Social activity" and "production" are relied upon by Marxists as primary and fundamental with respect to "idea" and "spirituality". According to the macrohistorical scale of the Marxist doctrine, any social transformational activity is transpersonal. "Individualism, notes one of the theorists of this trend N.N. Punin, — ... the dispersion of energy, which will achieve cultural edifying success, provided the direction of energy, organized social forms aimed at the Whole ... Culture is a consistent and progressive orientation towards creativity in the interests of the Whole and its collective power of all available energies of a given society mobilized, coordinated and mechanized according to the principles of modern scientific Knowledge by the central apparatus established by all individuals of society"[3]. Thus, the structure of the "I" in the eyes of Marxist oriented scholars seems to be destroyed and needs "outside help".

The comprehensive determinism of the understanding of culture by the horizon of "practice" results in the negation of its substance. In the philosophy of culture of Marxism, the need for the absolute is filled by postulating the "due" and including it in the system of the realities of culture as really existing.

III. HISTORIOSOPHY OF G.V. PLEKHANOV AS A THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE MARXIST CONCEPT OF CULTURE

The theoretical foundation of the Marxist culture concept is the ideas of one of its first theorists in Russia, Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856-1918). His position is based on the desire to reduce all objects of knowledge to the criterion of sociology, from which it follows that the aesthetic point of view — fundamentally dependent and

derivative — precedes the utilitarian one. As a defining moment for considering culture, the thinker chooses the principle of the genetic connection of phenomena, within which "origin" is perceived as "essence", inevitably reduced to "givenness". As a result, the question "what?" falls into total dependence on the solution of the question "how?"; and having been in this environment comes out of it altered and in fact unexplained. The signs of this understanding are the definitions of religion as "ignorance," and art as the "direct image of the production process" [4]. The filling of the philosophical space of the vision of culture with historical, political, public and social, and every day realities also becomes natural. Sociologizing art studies G.V. Plekhanov sees in the culture only a "mode of production". However, in essence, this is a talented and capacious embodiment of objectivist tendencies in the culturological analysis. It is important to note that for G.V. Plekhanov is characterized by a complete lack of ideas about metaphysics as the totality of the principles of cognition of culture, in the essential sense irreducible to the sphere of individual experience. The rejection of the teachings of F. Nietzsche and the criticism of Nietzscheanism from positions radically different from the immanent analysis are also connected with this. The Russian philosopher categorically denies the importance of any mental structures based on the independence of the "I", attributing them to subjective idealism. As a result, the elements of culture are considered by him from the standpoint of "public and social", and the object of "aesthetic" is practically not isolated.

In the work "History of Russian Social Thought" (1914-1917) G.V. Plekhanov proceeds from the basic position of historical materialism about the determining role of social being in relation to public consciousness and from the evaluation of the objective conditions for the development of social life. The thinker rejects both the thesis of the complete historical identity of Russia and the idea of the fundamental similarity between Russian and Western European development. He believes that the features that are present in the Russian historical process resemble the development process of the great despots of the East, while they either increase or decrease, and Russia "oscillates between West and East" [5].

To explain this main factor in Russian history G.V. Plekhanov addresses the geographical and historical conditions of the socio-economic, political and spiritual development of Russian society. An analysis of these conditions leads him to the following conclusions. Firstly, under the influence of geographical conditions, the growth of the productive forces of Russia, compared with Europe, is extremely slow. And, secondly, thanks to the prevailing historical situation, which strengthens geographical conditions, Russia is at first more and more removed from Europe and moving closer to the East. All this inevitably affects the formation of the so-called "Russian national spirit". The limit in this historical movement is the era of Peter the Great, which, on the one hand, brings the features of Moscow-despotic Russia to the extreme; on the other hand, the process of Europeanization of socio-political relations

and the Russian spiritual culture, which did not end at the beginning of the 1917 revolution, begins with it.

This estimate by G.V. Plekhanov is fully confirmed by the further development of Russian culture, since the events that followed the two revolutions of 1917 lead Russian society and culture to completely new conditions of historical existence, combining the features of East and West in the most paradoxical and unexpected way [6].

IV. THEORY OF REFLECTION AS A BASIS OF MARXIST-LENINIST PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

From the end of the 20s of the last century, the works of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) (1870-1924) began to exert a decisive influence on the science of culture, as well as on philosophy, aesthetics and all the human sciences. Moreover, it is not only about works that directly relate to issues of artistic culture — "Party organization and party literature" (1905), articles devoted to the works of L.N. Tolstoy (1908-1911) [7], but also on such works as "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" (1909), "On the Question of Dialectics" (1916), "The State and Revolution" (1917), which set forth the philosophical foundations of dialectical and historical materialism.

As with most theorists of Marxism, works on culture are not for V.I. Lenin of self-sufficient value. They are created and considered in the context of the class struggle associated with the affirmation of the "new" social system. Philosophical and culturological ideas and statements of V.I. Lenin are few and fragmentary. They do not receive an expanded expression in a special synthesis work.

The basis of the emerging Marxist-Leninist philosophy of culture, especially in relation to artistic culture, is the works of V.I. Lenin on the theory of reflection. In these works, he attempts to explain the complex, dialectically contradictory process of reflecting the external world in consciousness and show how the vital material in the course of the artist's knowledge of the surrounding reality is processed and lifted by his creative imagination to the height of figurative generalization, casting into an artistic form, which, in turn, becomes the subject of sensory, direct perception of the reader, viewer or listener [8].

Lenin's theory of reflection from the standpoint of materialistic dialectics reveals and studies the interrelationships of cultural artistic relations between subject and object, and critically relates to all subjective concepts that take art beyond human cognitive activity, contrasting "knowledge" in art with "creation", and declare artworks as the result "Pure thought" or the arbitrariness of the artist. For seventy years, relying on Lenin's theory of reflection, Soviet scientists tried to fight "against agnosticism and absolute relativism," while limiting the field of humanitarian, including philosophical and culturological research, to a single theoretical and methodological system [9].

Such well-known ideological positions, such as the principle of Party membership and national culture and art, as well as a selective attitude to the cultural heritage of the past, which are actually embodied in the practice of socialist

cultural construction, are organically linked with the Leninist concept of realism. Talking about the views of V.I. Lenin and his ideological supporters of culture should be borne in mind that they are embodied in their organizational activities, in the content of party documents prepared and approved by the leaders of the Soviet state, based on which the policy of the "cultural revolution" in the USSR was implemented.

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, the philosophy of culture of Marxism establishes a new system of coordinates for the study of culture — sociological. Based on the vision of being a culture — "only in social consumption, application, and activity", Marxism asserts that "the history of society, the science of society and the history of culture are one and the same ..." [10].

From these positions, Marxist philosophers criticize the "speculative historicism" of the cultural sciences, allowing consideration of the history of spiritual culture regardless of the history of the material and social life of people, and give a new definition of culture as "systems of physical things and human actions constituting the living forces of social being" [11]. This system covers everything that is the result of human activity, not only religion, art, morality, philosophy, science, but also the economy, politics, life. In the Marxist culture, monistic sociocultural unity manifests itself through the action of the general laws of development, common organizational principles, and methods of action and purposes that are material in nature [12]. So, N.N. Punin argues that the material substrate of spiritual culture is form — "form is equal to being," because it is real, objective, not amenable to individualistic violence, and consciousness is content.

The desire of Russian Marxists to discover principles and mechanisms that are universal for all areas of culture and have a fixed formal nature leads to the fact that the category "style" becomes one of the leading categories in philosophical and cultural studies of the 20s. It is interpreted as a law that contains "that sociological generalization, where technology is merged with ideology — these are socialized means of expressing a certain worldview" [13].

Marxists believe that culture appears as a living integrated system in the case when the interaction of the key lines culture is revealed, behind which stands the relationship of classes with their cultural dominant. The type (person) of culture is thus determined by the social class structure of society that has taken shape in historically specific conditions. Based on the principle of sociological determinism, Marxist historians of culture turn to the search for conformity of cultural entities with sociological equivalents and build a historical picture of the development of culture, derived from the system of formational development of society [14]. Although objectively such reductionism deprives the history of the culture of its own creative person, supporters of a sociological approach seek, above all, to discover a single internal principle of the formation of culture as integrity and decisive reason leading to the development of culture in history.

As a result, this principle, according to which the meaning and content of all forms of culture manifest themselves only in the process of meeting certain social and material needs inherent in a social group, gets the definition of the functional. Such practical expediency turns culture from a spontaneous concept into an organized system and gives dynamics to its development. Consistently pursuing these principles, I.I. Joffe expresses the following thought: "art is a process of production and use of things," and "a work of art is not an expression of the spirit, but a thing of culture that has a certain use" [15].

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