

The Fate of Marxism in Post-Totalitarian Russia:

*A Philosophical Inquiry into
Russia's Disposition towards Democracy*

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Despite the contemporary Russian slogan "to adopt the civilized world's norms," the Russian ability to confound this world by its unique way of life did not decrease during the years of perestroika. As before, supporters of Russian originality can cite with pride Fyodor Tyutchev's words: "Russia can't be understood by the mind, it can't be judged by common standards" (though the number of people who believe in a 'particular role' for Russia and 'its own way,' the way which will take the country out of its cycle of permanent crises, has decreased considerably since Tyutchev's times).

This opinion becomes stronger during numerous meetings with foreigners which ceased to be a compromising biographical fact thanks to Gorbachev--who now is himself a refusenik. I see many Western intellectuals coming to Russia with noble intentions to help "good Russians" turn their country quickly into something like the U.S. or Switzerland. They find with great surprise, however, that they are basically on another planet, in an alien social and cultural environment reminiscent of the Solaris Ocean (from a novel by Stanislaw Lem).

The resulting shock from the collision between two different and mutually incomprehensible worlds is even stronger since it is unexpected. Certainly the average European or American who is going to Moscow realizes that he is going to a different country, a country which was labeled the "evil empire" not too long ago. But he also realizes that there *have been* significant changes since the times of charming Gorby. Russians sent away the evil maniacs intent to "bury" the civilized world, stopped voting unanimously in the Parliament, elected a president who could talk without cue-cards, finally acquired the Big Mac and Pepsi-Cola, and left all the Western countries behind in the number of commodity exchange houses. As a result, a foreigner going to Moscow nowadays no longer equips himself adequately with the armor of indifference, calm curiosity and cultural tolerance. In any case, buying

a ticket to Moscow leads you not to a tribe of savages dancing naked around a bonfire, but to the Christian European country which gave the world Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov and is capable of launching space crafts and producing lethal modern weapons.

Regardless, the shock of non-recognition for Russia's guests is very strong. It results from peculiarities in the Russian way of life, the goals of that life's orientation, the traditions of economic acts and the peculiarities of the political mentality which provoke different emotions from different foreigners. Certainly in the case of businessmen such emotion is a weak consternation turning into evil abuse. Thus, they collide with an unbelievable amount of bureaucratic extortion or with delightful and truly childish partners who are accustomed to setting business meetings not at 2:00 o'clock, but around "2:00 o'clock." However, foreigners cleverly will not always evaluate unusual things in Russia as being the worst. Sometimes they see appealing aspects in the non-standard features of the Russian way of life. They then leave the country with a feeling of sympathy for the romantic way of life that is connected with human warmth and openness--something which Western rationalistic civilization regrettably cannot afford to have.

Everything that has been said so far has a direct connection with this article's theme--the attitude to the teaching of Marx in post-totalitarian (as we all hope) Russia. It is not only the characteristic of Marxism, as it now, but what it will be as well. The attitude to Marx, as I see it, illustrates those particular traits of Russian mentality unintelligible to foreigners, traits which left their mark on the country's history and which become very sharp in the age of revolutionary changes.

In the Beginning, There Was the Word...

The first such trait is the extraordinarily serious attitude of the Russian intelligentsia towards the social theory institute--towards the faith in the omnipotence of ideas. In such an attitude, Western colleagues perceive something mystic as a matter of fetishism. A professor from an American university who delivered some lectures at the Philosophy Faculty of Moscow State University told me, absolutely puzzled, about his meetings with his Russian colleagues:

I am astounded by the frame of mind of your intellectuals. Hospitable Russians as they are, they invite me, feed me with products which I never saw in the shops, drink vodka and all the time we talk, talk, talk. What

about? About Marxism, socialism, communism, and other 'isms.' One can get the feeling that this isn't Russia, but happy Switzerland, and that society is actually not on the brink of starvation and civil war. In these hard times, can't the intellectual elite of your country choose other, more concrete themes for discussion other than the fantasies of a dead bearded economist from another country?

The interlocutor's perplexity gives rise to a whole range of feelings within me--how to explain the meaning of the "fantasies of a bearded economist" in our lives to a man who never lived in the "waiting room of communism," as we supposedly did, or saw the Communist Party Congresses on TV? Does he realize that the country's economic dislocation and its political instability are the result not of a war, a natural calamity or a Martian invasion, but of the "socialist choice" of our parents and grandparents with their dreams of equality and fraternity? Does this professor realize that he happened to visit a truly unique society, in which the priority belongs not to the average man's everyday necessities of life, but to the fulfillment of the ideas of old and new "bearded economists?"

My American colleague does not realize the historical interest in the abstract meaning of *The Communist Manifesto*, because he lives in a society where such ideas take their proper place in university auditoriums and never turn "from dogma into a guide of action." He lives in a society accustomed to giving credence to natural impersonal mechanisms of division and coordination of social functions, where the market's "invisible hand" functions well and dictates to the people the imperatives of economic and social expediency. In such a society, the "spontaneity" of social development cannot be understood as something frustrating for the intellectual dignity of man. In this case, spontaneity is associated not with the disorder of a traffic jam which arises because of the absence of necessary police control, but from the efficient function of a human organism where neither the liver nor the kidneys nor the lungs need a "leading and guiding role" of ideas. They function so much better the less the mind takes notice of them--with the exception, of course, of illnesses where the role of the doctor is merely the rehabilitation of normal functions.

Western society, however, does need a *few* conscious regulations and sagacious economists who can contribute the necessary corrections (as it is in Europe today) to the natural being of things. However, we are speaking about *corrections* exactly, corrections in the functions of the mind--to follow life's logic but not direct it or make Copernican

revolutions in its solidly organized traditions. With this I mean the conscience which is not free of the complex of "fatal self-assurance" (marvelously described by Friedrich A. Hayek). Also, it is the conscience which understands a careful and "short-sighted" following of the nearest visible interests of common people that brings, in the end, more good and justice than Promethean leaps towards the "common good."

It is evident that such mentality, personified by my American interlocutor, lends itself to the ironic fact that the prevalence of global social theories in society is inversely proportional to the availability of sausage and bananas (one kilogram of which costs a third of the average Russian monthly wage). The country he has arrived to is like a watch without movement, and if you want to know the time, you have to turn the hands yourself.

In Russia, it is easy to see that the fetishism of ideas is the result of another way of life. History explains that Russian society has always been of an "ideocratic" nature (life was not the base of society; ideas were)--a society where the day-to-day behavior of people in the political and economic spheres has always been under a large influence of ideological schemes. The essence of such schemes was, as a rule, not directed towards the nearest pragmatic effect, but toward a messianic consciousness: two birds in the bush instead of a bird in the hand.

I Will Order Them to Be Honest!

Certainly such aspects of Russian history found their most complete realization during the Soviet period, when many people from professors to Lenin's cooks** forgot Christianity and acquired Marxism as their new religion. The irony of fate is that atheistic Marxism could produce such a religion. Marx planned his teachings as a strong scientific theory, proceeding from the idea of a "natural historical" social movement according to the strong law of economic determination. Marx most definitely would turn over in his coffin if he saw a crowd of semi-literate people speculating about "being and determining conscience," and then shredding this being, driving it with bayonets and firing squads into the frames determined by consciousness. Life in this case did not determine consciousness, as he wrote, but the other way around: life was being determined *consciously*. In the process, a historically

** Lenin once wrote that even a cook should be able to know how to govern the new Soviet state (ed.).

unprecedented forceful domination of ideas took place over life, even if this life could for some time take a wrong path.

But it would be a mistake to think that the excessive growth of ideas characterized only the Soviet period of Russian history. Violence over real life, adjusted to an abstract scheme, was always a misfortune for Russia. In history we find many unsuccessful attempts to reform Russian society, unsuccessful because they were not made out of *possibility*, but out of *desire*. Despite the honest intentions of Russian politicians desiring to do good for their country, they faced two interconnected shortcomings. From one side, they did not have the type of intellectual modesty which prevents man from imagining himself as "all knowing and all powerful." It was a modesty which would force them to evaluate critically the compulsive plans promising sudden cures for the country. From the other side, they had faith in the absolute plasticity of the "social material," expressed by Tinyanov through the words of Nicholas I in *Infant Vitushnikov*: "I order my engineers to be honest!"

This faith, that any good intentions could be realized, condoned the use of force to bring order and firm resolution and to punish "remiss people." This was, and still is now, one of the distinguishing traits of Russian history. It is significant that this faith is shared not only by the authorities, but also by the very strata of the population long accustomed to setting their hopes on the "good ruler," who can easily solve any problem. It is necessary, the mentality goes, to only teach those who do not know *how* to do things and force those who do not *want* to do things. So many people look to Yeltsin not for "democratic talk," but for "lasting and firm" order so as to make society diligent, practical and competent.

This faith is quite irrational to many foreigners. Moreover, besides being ideocratic, civil society in Russia has always been dominated by the state's structures. The stifling state machinery, despite its ineffectiveness, could actually accomplish that which could only be a dream to the Western supporters of étatism--to control the presence or absence of beards on people's faces or their style of clothes, regulate their sexual life, and so on. It is no wonder that the people actually remember rulers who knew how to obtain fulfillment of any given idiotic order. The question is, why in such a case is it impossible to obtain the fulfillment of a "clever" order which will lead to the common good? And why then, is it impossible to force people to be happy even if they do not want to be free, since freedom is a conceived and fulfilled

necessity?*** This faith in the absolute power of "clever force," "good with fists," etc., became the basis of the people's support for totalitarianism, which gives authorities the mortally dangerous "doctor's right" to hurt the patient for the sake of curing him. Such mentality finds its own historical support in the experience of our many tyrants' political governing. These tyrants were not able to make people honest and virtuous, but they knew quite well how to paralyze society with fright so that visible signs of dissipation and extortion were hidden under the guarantee of safety.

Thus, I suppose that, hyperbolic to Western tastes, interests in Marxism convey in reality some historical traditions of the ideocratic Russian society. Certainly such hypertrophy of ideas can be found in Western history too. Since the medieval death of what the early 20th century Russian thinker Pitirim Sorokin called "ideonationalism," the Western world experienced Jacobism as well as Germany's blindness, caused by its defeat and other things. But the intoxication with abstract ideas was never the essence of Western life, but only occurred during moments of crisis and dramatic episodes. This is not so in Russia, where exceptions quite often become rules, and European rules become exceptions.

Apparently in such a genotype of the Russian mentality, there is an immunological deficiency against "philosophizing." This prevents people from living and working unless their life and work are illuminated by some supreme transcendental sense, or included in the world's chain of causes and effects. A lot of philosophers, historians, writers and poets tried to understand the peculiarity of the "mysterious Russian soul"--which is short on the common joys of life, and where it is boring to eat, drink and wear clothes for no particular reason--without asking about the meaning of their being in the world. This trait (especially strange in Russia where few can dress, eat, and drink plentifully anyways) is of course not inherent to all Russians--among whom there is quite a sufficient number, fortunately for us, of "normal" people. But according to statistics, this trait is spread wider than in the West. You collide with it not only in literature, but also in day-to-day contacts with people heroically trying to despise the "goods of life" even though there is a complete shortage of everything. People of this idealistic type are not only old-fashioned intellectuals, but are even found among the new

*** These last words belong to Marx (ed.).

"bourgeoisie." Many of them, in the manner of the old Russian merchant class, are ashamed of their riches and try to underestimate them, and not because they are afraid of extortioners or tax inspectors. You can find philosophers busily making reflections about many peculiar environments--from the environment of Russian prostitutes (so glorified by Dostoyevsky), to the nimble speculators and their ability for unorthodox behavior which absolutely clashes with the norms of the commercial rationalism philosophy in the spirit of Max Weber's "Protestant Ethic." Maybe this dissatisfied idealization results in the excessive Russian drinking habit, which often strikes happy people who otherwise have no obvious reasons to enter into this vice.

Is It Good to be Sober?

In Russia today, it must be said that it is popular to laud the West's pragmatic soberness, seeing only pluses in it. Among students and other people, the criticism of the "beggarly philosophy of a shopkeeper"--sacrificing the highest spiritual values for a kopeck or two--does not enjoy popularity any longer.

Many people, in their own experience, came to the conclusion that the aspiration to abolish (1) the economic rationalism of money (which they equate with inequality and alienation) (2) the romantic intention to jump over from the "realm of material necessity" to the "realm of existential freedom" and (3) the attempts to suppress the "dirty instinct" of private property led, in practice, to such a de-humanization of social life, to such social amoralism, that the result remains unimaginable even to the "fat West."

It became clear that the "socialist choice," which favored the humanization of social relations in their practical implementation, is the privilege of only the very rich. Only an owner can refuse the fetishism of property; hence, a "have-not," who suffers from the absence of property, fiercely disclaims the object of his concealed longing.

All that being true, the uncritical attitude to Western rationalism arouses a feeling of regret. Certainly the intelligentsia--if it is indeed seriously concerned about the people's welfare--must welcome the social consequences of Western pragmatism. Doing justice to it though, we should remember that the implantation of such mentality in the Russian soil will lead to obvious losses in the nation's spiritual life.

Say what you like, but the Russian culture of which we are proud, always had a somewhat strange "compensative" mechanism of develop-

ment, which worked according to the principle "the worse, the better." The worse the country's practical affairs were, the more Russian thought stormed into transcendental heights of spirit and with the most zeal. This is exactly what occurred in the 19th century, when Russia was suffering from the relics of serfdom and was lagging behind its European neighbors at any point of economic and political improvement. At that time in Russia, there appeared an unprecedented export of art; priceless *chef d'oeuvres* were created; all of which conquered the heart of "better-off" Europe. In the same manner, the brilliant culture of the Silver Century was also created under the conditions of a perishing empire which eventually led to the national catastrophe of 1917. The creative pathos of our culture is apparently directly related to the number of hungry, humble and outraged people near the house of the thinker who is interpreting such a culture. It is wrong to make an absolute from such uncoordinated "social" and "cultural" dynamics (again Sorokin's term), but the trait undoubtedly exists and manifests itself with particular vengeance in Russia, which is inclined to existential reflections.

It is not, of course, *de rigueur* to starve people in order for artists and philosophers to find significant creative urges. I speak out only against the naive idealization of one particular way of life and the total condemnation of another one. I advocate a true dialectic of history, which regrettably does not just allow people to obtain while not losing anything, or at least what it would not be desirable to lose. We should realize the defects of the way of life which we are trying to adjust for ourselves, not imagined ones. We should understand that we cannot "buy" its advantages separately from its vices. By now, in the beginning of the period of "Westernization," we see how commercial calculation does not want to reckon with culture's sovereignty, seeking to adjust it to the standards of commerce. Looking at a cinema's billboard nowadays we can thank God (as well as the former Goskino) that we saw *Andrei Rublyov* before *Rambo* and *Terminator* burst onto the screen, films which were capable of knocking out film director Andrei Tarkovsky during the first second of an honest "commercial" round.

Political censorship, unlike the market, could sometimes be deceived. Artists were the first to realize that the dictatorship of the market more than political censorship could seriously deform culture. Now, professionals in the fundamental sciences are also making this sad discovery. But while the natural sciences have the opportunity of some defense, many humanities can perish indefinitely because they do not

meet the canons of pragmatic rationalism--in particular my own specialization, social philosophy and general theoretic sociology.

During perestroika, inspired by the call to throw off the blinders of historical-materialism, we looked for contacts with Western colleagues and sent the best students to foreign--mostly American--universities by means, fair or foul. I must say that the results were, overall, dissatisfying. We found that very abstract social theories are either not interesting to our American colleagues, or they are worked out by modern successors to Weber, Émile Durkheim, Sorokin, or Talcott Parsons, on a level which provoked very sarcastic commentary by my students. They found a different hierarchy of interests at the philosophical and sociological departments of many American universities. An American student, in contrast to his Russian counterpart, gets a grip on his pen when the lecturer reports the average age of congresswomen, but he is not interested in the problems of high theory: What is human society? Are there universal levels of its composition and functioning? What algorithms of its historical transformation are there? Do they correspond to human nature? and so on. I think this is the case when pragmatic rationalism turns and shows its defective side, harming not only human culture, but also the very practice of social life. It discards areas of study which seem unnecessary only now when Western civilization moves on confidently, without the need for deep self-reflection. The situation can change if the basic trends in world history lead to a mortal menace against the "homosapiens" by the "homofaber" (the man who knows versus the man who does), or if an antagonism were to grow between the "world's town" and "world's country." Therefore, safe countries will find themselves at a turning point in history and will have to adopt non-typical reactions to non-typical situations.

That is when they will need a deep philosophy of history. It would allow people to specify their own aim in life and orientate themselves in a new reality which will exclude the automatic reproduction of habitual stereotypes of being. Let us hope that there will still be thinkers who will not turn to stockbrokers, taxi-drivers or canned-beer sellers--as they are doing today in my country.

Let Us Return to Marx: The Conspirator and His Hobby

Let us return now to the problem of Marxism in Russia. The super-serious attitude about it on the part of the Russian intelligentsia

becomes apparent in the form of unconcealed hatred, irate negation, and malicious jeers under the "ravings of a bearded maniac." Marx's ratings have declined to less than zero. Nowadays, most intellectuals perceive Marx as a founder of Satanic theory uniting pseudo-science with misanthropy; he is also perceived as a founder of the "active utopia" (Z. Bauman) turning people into a "raw mass" for the construction of communism. Contemporary polemic involving Marxism resembles the medieval procedure of exorcism, the banishment of a devil--which had exploited the weaknesses of man to capture his soul. One can see that the notion of "weakness" is constantly present in the discussions of Marxism by its critics (following Berdyaev). And, one can recognize that the devil captured Russia not accidentally, but because he harmonized with some of the strings of the Russian soul--its messianic disposition.

Nowadays any attempt to speak in support of Marxism provokes a very irritated reaction from the audience. From the point of psychology, this reaction is clear if we remember all the grave crimes made under the flag of Marxism and in the name of the Communist ideal. This was a "bad parody of the Gospels," a quasi-human aim which disclosed its true nature with its chosen means of realization. Idiosyncrasy on Marxism is natural if we also recall that the intelligentsia always used it as a means of spiritual violence--"not as a world outlook or a method but as a lash, as a police-punitive category," in the words of O. Freigenberg's letter to B. Pasternak.

Nevertheless, the mood of total negation towards Marxism is, in reality, a substitution of the previous hosannas which the current democratic-intelligentsia sing. These spirited invectives provoke outrage from sober competent people--supporters of the same "objectivism" which Lenin replaced with the notorious "Party principle," and under a new guise which still prevails in the Russian mentality. Describing myself as a member of such objectivists, I cannot agree with the understanding of Marxism as an absolute lie, a pernicious delusion whose unfoundedness was proven by the real course of history. Several circumstances at once prevent me from taking this point of view, with which not only essayists, writers and politicians agree, but scientists-humanists as well (with the small exception of a few Communist disciples still believing in "Saint Karl").

First of all, as a man who is occupied professionally with social philosophy and theoretic sociology, I can prove that Karl Marx came into history not only as a "framing revolutionary," the author of *The*

Communist Manifesto, and the founder of the First International. Besides this, Marx also had time to found a philosophical social theory, which does not yield to the conceptions of Weber or Durkheim, but in some points surpasses them considerably. The fact that Marx, in the words of Charles Wright Mills, was "one of the most perspicacious investigators of human civilization" is admitted widely in Western academia. It is an axiom for many theorists who did not suffer from "practiced Marxism" and hence, keep objective criteria alive.

This does not mean that Marx founded the only true conception of the structure, function and development of social systems. On the contrary, he founded quite an ordinary theory which, as any other scientific construction, has its own strong and weak sides and includes both true and false statements.

Certainly we must admit that the stronger factor of ideological infiltration is quite often the source of the mistakes in Marx's theories. Marx, as we know, often shared disbelief in the ability of scientists to realize their own political inclinations and to block their search for scientific truth. On the contrary, he considered a "right" ideological orientation as a necessary condition for reaching scientific truth. As a result, Marx the scientist often speaks as Marx the revolutionary, losing the ability for objective control in, or the examination of, his own statements. For example, when I read his discourses about the so-called "inefficient labor" of the bourgeoisie, the exploitation as the norm of relationship between the workers and employers, the classes doomed to antagonism but not to conflict interaction, the state whose main function is not coordination but repression--I realize that Marx sat down at his desk with practically ready answers to very difficult questions. As a scientist, he only tried to mount conclusions dictated by his beliefs as a revolutionary.

This does not mean that we cannot find some pearls of scientific truth amid the ideological "muck." It does not mean that Marx, despite his political inclinations, could not formulate answers on important questions of science; that all of his theories became hopelessly old and have only an archival interest because they fail to correspond with the existing realities of human societies. In particular, I cannot agree with the widespread opinion that the practice of "Communist construction" in Russia is the best evidence which disproves the theoretical views of Marx.

In reality, the case is completely different. It is evident for scientists that in the former USSR we had a political regime which tried to carry

the economic and political realities of Asian despotism into the epoch of industrial production. It managed for a time to annul private property and substitute it with a "people's property" which actually became the economic base for a horrible exploitation of labor. The regime managed for a time also to maintain the supremacy of the ideas which sacrificed economic expediency for a contrived "ideological necessity."

The result of all these "innovations" was a collapse as inevitable as a solar eclipse. A collapse was predicted in the beginning of the century by many adept supporters of "authentic Marxism," who regarded Leninism as an Asian synthesis of a caricatured Marx "with Stepan Razin."****

The downfall of such a regime, from a position of Karl Kautsky and Bernstein, was a brilliant confirmation of the central postulates of the "materialist" understanding of history. Proven once again was the "natural historical" course of social development, in which ideas always disgrace themselves when they lose touch with the practical interest and when politics smashes itself and society by attempting to dominate economics. Only those people who consider the doctrine of the materialist understanding of history dispute freedom of human will and negate the ability of ideas to deform the real practice and can speak about the collapse of this doctrine.

Even with the strongest will in the world, you cannot break the law of gravity or the law of thermodynamics. However, a society, in contrast to nature, gives people considerably more freedom. The "crazy" consciousness *is* able to ignore the practical needs of the people and replace the laws of the market with the idiotic calculations of Gosplan. But in so doing, people doom society to stagnation and cataclysms, to destruction in the short and long terms, and to failure in competition with countries which avoid violence over the very nature of historical development. Thus, the first case which prevents us from agreeing with the deteriorative critics of Marxism is that this theory has not only ideological implications but also deep theoretical general conclusions which can contribute to the structure of the integral social theory which we are yet to construct. I hope that this new theory will be founded on the principle of natural sciences, offering a common field of problems with the greatest number of competing hypotheses.

**** Stepan Razin was the leader of a strong and widespread Russian peasant uprising in the second half of the 18th century.

To answer life's questions, the scientific community will have to choose among the arguments of Marx, Sorokin, Parsons, Lewis Coser and others. The ideas of different sociologists, as we know, can supplement each other. For example, the formation typology offered by Marx, which points out the differences between feudal and capitalist societies in Japan, can supplement the civilization typology offered by Arnold Toynbee explaining why under any conditions of economic being a Japanese will remain Japanese, keeping his own unique mentality and still distinguishing himself from a Korean or a Frenchman.

"All right," critics will tell me. "You convinced us that Marx wrote as a hobby a pair of clever works in the fields of economics and sociology. But are these ideas the essence and the core of the disgusting doctrine called 'Marxism'?" It is evident that the ideology of communism forms this doctrine. This ideology deceived and ruined millions of people, forcing our country to live in the "equality" of misery, the gulag, and never-ending lines in empty shops. This ideology encroached on the right of property, deprived people of economic freedom and political rights, and carried out the project of "the introduction of the identity of ideas in Russia." Are we really prepared to say that this ideology died and will never rise again?

Did Marxism Die?

It is difficult for me to answer this kind of question because interlocutors often do not understand my position. They consider me inconsistent or insincere, and I am even afraid to admit my secret liking for communism. The ideology of "radical democratism," which prefers fabricated equality to freedom, is not close to me. This ideology portends not the equality in law and starting conditions of life, but the substantial "real" equality when a splendid surgeon or a talented scientist receives the same wages as a bus-driver. The ideology of "social architecture" also is not close to me. This ideology thinks it has the right to experiment with living people in order to build the future "kingdom of good" from human fates. The ideology of "revolutionarism," or "social impatience," which thinks that one surgical operation in the life of society is better than a long social therapy, is not close to me.

Nevertheless, I cannot consider the Communist ideology as false because I believe that systems of value judgement, as Weber showed, generally cannot be qualified as simply true or false. This is the main difference between ideology and science. A science tries to understand

the world's logic which is given to us by compulsion; you cannot change the indexes in physical formulas if you want a plane to fly and a ship to float. Assertions by scientists are subject to scientific verification; they can be considered as true or false (though the criteria of what is "truth" do not lie on the surface, but are the subject of heated controversies in different philosophical schools).

With ideology the case is different. In their postulates, people describe the world not in and of itself, but their attitude to the world, their values toward it as good or evil, just or unjust, pretty or ugly. So, judgements of ideology are directed to the wide circle of human preferences which change from individual to individual, from party to party, from society to society. Man, as Weber wrote, has a right to prefer blonde to brunette, but does not have the right to make his choice absolute, considering it the truth and imposing it upon others.

Certainly, a society has the right to limit freedom of choice if it forbids what is perilous to other people. Joint human behavior is based on universally recognized values. However, the general meaning of values is not identical to the objective character of truths. What is due, as Immanuel Kant proved, does not follow from being; truth does not coincide with benefit.

It is exactly these philosophical judgements and not the precariousness of ideological convictions which forbid us from valuing the world outlook of Marxism as a lie. There is no doubt that such ideology is not fit for modern civilization, which has tired of revolutions and has the potential for peaceful evolution, according to the Russian saying, "The slower you go, the further you get." But in the history of many countries and peoples, there were periods when the methods of social therapy simply were not fit for their occasion; when freedom, honor, dignity and life depended on their ability to act strongly and resolutely and cut, but not untangle the Gordian knot. Many of these nations and peoples, which are now great examples of clever social tolerance, are proud of their revolutionary past and of their ancestors who could defend themselves with weapons when necessary. Taking this into account, I would not rush to affirm that revolution is an absolute evil, and revolutionary ideology is a harmful and ill-intentioned lie. Who knows--maybe the times of revolutionary pathos as a norm will come again and the contemporary criticism of it will seem the cowardly philosophy of philistines.

And so is the case with the ideology of total equality. Certainly we realize that such ideology hampers the real development of modern

society and hinders the self-improvement of competent people who are able to do things for others. The philosophy of equality is not expedient in modern conditions, and leads to the opposite results which it intends to achieve.

But this was not always so. There was a time when people could not allow themselves to tolerate simple forms of inequality. They could not, conditionally speaking, give an additional piece of meat as an incentive to an able hunter because they divided the meat equally among everyone. The "incentive," unfortunately, could become the reason for someone's death by starvation before the economic laws dictate that more meat would be acquired.

Can we be sure that humanity will never return to the times of levelling distribution, under hard and pressing ecological conditions or, on the contrary, under the conditions of unprecedented prosperity? We all enjoy equal access to oxygen, so we do not think of fighting for it, do we?

Marx, as we know, believed that inequality would become unwise because of its uselessness. Certainly we can regard such prognoses with irony. But it is clear to me in any case that the philosophy of equality had, has and will continue to have the greatest number of admirers among people who have an aversion to any privileges, who do not count on their own ability to live through adversity, or who are predisposed to levelling distribution psychologically. Until there are such people and while differences between strong men and weak ones exist, the instinct of equality will accompany humanity, making undying ideologies, like Marxism, along the way.

The Lesson for the Future

Thus, let me say that Marxism as an ideology is a normal axiological construction--a set of ideas which contain nothing wittingly revolting. Although the social practices of communism and fascism once turned out to be similar to one another in many points, I think it is impossible to compare them from an ideological point of view. A lot of Western intellectuals who would prefer suicide to membership in a Nazi party gave credit to Marxism without considering themselves immoral. On the contrary, they regarded Marxism as "practical acting humanism."

Just so, a lot of opponents of Marxism in Russia (including Berdyaev), began by liking this doctrine. Then they criticized it, quite often with a feeling of regret. For example, the great Russian thinker

S. Frank considered that "the downfall of socialism will make a significant change in the spiritual life of man, because the preconditions of socialism would have fallen to the ground as well. They are the humanist faith in the natural kindness of man, in the possibility of an Eden on Earth...the idea which dominated the whole European thought in the course of the last centuries." Frank believed, by the way, that the socialist idea had only one small defect--it could not be put into practice.

The question remains: Why did the attempt to realize this "cute" faith taught by Marxism bring so much suffering, instead of taking a respectable place in a series of egalitarian utopias? I think that one of the main causes was the attempt to realize the Communist utopia in Russia, the mentality of which was the least suitable for such an experiment. The same Russian spiritual attribute which caused socialism to fail manifests itself today in the attempts of Marx's critics to remove him from the history of the country, just as they are removing his monuments in city squares. Most Russian intellectuals neither can nor want to observe the difference between the judgements of truth and the value judgements of preferences. It is revealing that the word "truth" in Russian has two different meanings. One of them is the truth as a reflective judgement; another is the truth as a value judgement. The truth in the second meaning may be sole and final. It might be proven by force if your opinion is different from mine. Certainly the Russians are not the only ones who possess this trait. We are not the inventors of ideological fanaticism. Nevertheless, in Russia this fanaticism has a tendency to be carried out in real life, which makes it very dangerous. I remember the paradoxical opinion that Russians are the one great people who could make a great state without an "instinct of statehood" and without the ability to forgive each other's serious ideological differences in the name of common national interests. Now we know what adherence to ideology can lead to. We would like to believe that the Russian intelligentsia will learn a lesson from the country's terrible experience, and not allow contemporary democratic ideology to adopt all the vices of its Communist precursor. The fortunes of the country, which we all love, depend on this. As for us critics, we reproach our beloved country not because of our lack of patriotism, but because we believe in its future--in its vast constructive possibilities.