




Philosophy – Topic No.10 Philosophy of Marxism.

Talking of the Marxist philosophy we mean first of all the two founders of this revolutionary theory – Karl Marx and Frederic Engels. The father of the former was a great lawyer and the one of the latter was the owner of a factory. So, both were well educated. Their main and key creations: “Capital”, “Dialectics of Nature”, “German Ideology” and many others.

What were the background and the motive power of philosophy to emerge?. We can talk of the rapid and dynamic development of capitalism that eventually caused the tremendous difference and conflict of Labor and Capital. The crisis of overproduction with the unemployment as the consequence increased the gap between the poor and the rich. The disappointment with the liberal ideas was close to its peak. The motto “Freedom, Equality and Fraternity” was not fascinating any more. It pushed the appearance of some new revolutionary force as the working class.



Some new discoveries in the natural sciences consolidated the position of the materialistic dialectics. The discovery of the cell structure of the animals and vegetation proved the evolutionary way of the life processes. Evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin had some explosive effect.

The law on conservation and conversion of energy has consolidated the position of the materialist philosophy.

The Marxist philosophy has absorbed all the achievements of the predecessors – the ones of the Ancient Greece, Renaissance, Enlightenment and German classical philosophy.

The basic idea of Marxism was the creative transformation of the social life as the result of the profound cognition and setting up in the end of the day a humanistic society which would be governed by knowledgeable and creative persons. The strategic goal was the universal human happiness.

The actual contribution of Marx and Engels was the successive development of the materialistic teaching of philosophy. All their predecessors understood came up with the idealistic approach. The classics of Marxism came up with the purely materialistic view point – **materialistic understanding of history**. As the result of the careful analysis of all the previous stages of history they singled out the mode of production and the relevant relations as the basic element that put the whole thing into the motion.

They have made some discoveries that were striking for that time of history:

Surplus Value and the **theory of Alienation**

They (Marx and Engels) arrived at the conclusion that the consciousness of the people is dependent on the actual conditions of living (being).

Marx and Engels looked up at the process of the development of the society as the flow of the successive steps on the way to the social progress.

One of the reasons of the failure of the Soviet Union that ended up with the break-off of the country and eventual crash of the theory was the imposing of the teaching for such a backward state as Russia.

K.Marx and his theory are not to blame. Its time will come to the point that the advanced countries will take up this teaching under some new historical conditions.




Dialectics as complete and integral teaching on development.

The greatest achievement of Marx and Engels was the integration (fusion) of materialism and dialectics. The starting point of their philosophy was the admission of Hegel's dialectics with the transformation and modernization on the materialistic way. On the basis of the careful analysis of their time they proved that the central line of all the contraries went through the productive forces and the relations of production.


They realized that the capitalist system was absolutely ruthless and obviously believed that the leading social force was the working class – the class that would create a great future. It was something quite innovative as before the only social group capable of pushing the progress was intelligentsia as the force to generate some new ideas of change.

In the theory of cognition they also came up with the considerable change of the Hegel's ideas. If all the philosophers before Marx and Engels did not go any further than contemplation.



According to Marx any cognition is the interaction of the subject (human) and the object (things, phenomena) targeted by the human activity. All the rest which is outside of the human attention are nothing but the raw material of Nature. The human activity is the within the equation of the subject-object has a great impact of the human as the expansion of his intellectual field and the gained skill as the result of the processing the object area.


The Marxist philosophy had a positive impact of the problem of the truth which is not a theoretical and speculative phenomenon, but a concrete and practical reflection of concrete being with the interrelated package of discoveries. Truth is not something fixed and stable. It is changeable and dynamic.



Marx and Engels were very critical of the Feuerbach's interpretation of a human who was described as biological specie. They admitted the biosocial nature of a human, but delineated the actual active role of a human “as the summary of the progressing social relations”.


The Marxist philosophy was the final tuning of the European rationalism with the human as the dominating force of the changing world.

In the last quarter of the XIX century the ideas of Marxism reached the frontiers of Russia. This process was connected with the activity of the society “Liberation of Labor” headed by the prominent Marxists G.Plekhanov and V.Lenin. The Marxists of Russia made a great contribution to the Marxist's theory and practice.



G.V.Plekhanov (1856-1918) created a number of theoretical works on various areas of the social science. He was a strong believer that development of capitalism in Russia was a very progressive thing that would generate the historical force – working class that would eventually dominate in all the spheres of life.

Being a successive materialist he came off against the ideas of supporting peasantry (Narodniks). He was absolutely sure that the ideals of Narodniks are out-of-date and the revolutions to come would be connected with the working class as the influential political force.



V.Lenin (1870-1924) started his revolutionary career in the last decade of the XIX century. He is the author of a number of theoretical works like “Philosophic Papers” – the Manuscripted ideas as the rough papers for a fundamental monographic work on the dialectical logics. His other work – “Materialism and Empiriocriticism” was devoted to the issues of cognition. He was very critical of the two extremes – dogmatism and relativism. V.Lenin worked out the definition of the Matter as something objective and existing on its own. He also created a number of works on capitalism in its final stage imperialism.