
Theoretical Approaches towards Global Social Development

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Abstract:

Background/Objective: *The topicality of the research is stipulated by the determination of the theoretical approaches that could serve as a basis for path finding out of the global systemic crisis. Theoretical views of outstanding economists of the past toward the future of humanity and the real state of the world are of undoubted interest. The article deals with the ideas of G.V. Plekhanov, analyzes the results of their implementation in Russia in the 1990s. Possible perspectives of social development are associated with a change in the socio-economic views on the role and the place of nature in today's context.*

Methods: *The basic methods of studying this problem are the economic analysis, deduction, factor analysis and system-structural approach.*

Findings: *The authors have given the analysis of the theory of economic growth stages, considered the views of Plekhanov toward the development of capitalism in Russia and the modification of the social nature of the monarchy and its consequences. To secure its future, the humankind is destined to change moral principles. Changing social consciousness depends on the level of culture and education. The theoretical approaches are determined that could be core ones in searching for ways out of the today's global problems.*

Improvements/Novelty: *Solving global problems of today such as nature and society, war and peace, social inequality is closely linked to changes in consumption patterns. Nature, life on the planet should be a common goal for all countries and peoples. Economy and politics should be subject to this goal. These findings are of practical value to scientists, economists, sociologists, philosophers, as well as for college teachers.*

Keywords: *Capitalism, Development, Populism, Marxism, Modern Capitalism.*

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1. Introduction

The research of academic economists is especially of interest; they endeavor, on the basis of the economic development analysis, whereas the economy is inextricably intertwined with the development of society itself, to divide into periods and predict the future of society. Joseph Schumpeter argued that it was through history that made it possible to study economics. K. Marx, (1960) in Volume I of 'Capital', emphasizes that discovery of the economic law of the modern society progression is the ultimate goal of his work.

Is the research of V.I. Lenin (1961) 'On the slogan of the United States of Europe' not of interest nowadays? In 2000, we witnessed the creation of this association - the European Union, and today we see the contradictions that have been shaking the union. One cannot but agree with what V. Lenin wrote 100 years ago, 'no division of income and spheres of influence can be effected otherwise than in 'proportion to strength', and strength changes with the course of economic development'.

Rostow (1971) tried formulating a theory of economic growth stages of his own. Originally, he proposed to distinguish three stages of growth, and later the reality of life forced him to increase this number to five:

1. The traditional society.
2. The preconditions for take-off.
3. The take-off.
4. The drive to maturity.
5. The age of high mass consumption.

Later, Rostow (1971) adds a sixth stage of 'life quality search', when the spiritual development of a human is brought to the forefront. Thereby, he tried to map out the future development outlook of the modern Western societies as well. Interestingly, the elements of such spiritual development can be observed in some developed countries, at least, an understanding that the material well-being cannot be the only purpose of life.

Even such a brief analysis of the outstanding economists' research shows how interesting the future of the humanity is, how the present, the past, and the future are interrelated. Thus, Braudel (1992) writes in his famous work 'The Time of World': 'Is the present more than by half not in the grip of the past, persistently striving to survive? And does the past not represent, through its regularities, its differences and its similarities the key necessary for any understanding of the present?'

2. Analysis of Studies and Publications

In accordance with the abovementioned, it is appropriate to consider the views of G.V. Plekhanov (1956) on the development of capitalism in Russia and the future

prospect of social interaction formation in our country. G.V. Plekhanov (1956) was long under the influence of populism. Populists believed that the development of capitalism in Russia was impossible, that there was no proletariat in Russia in the Western European sense, or that it was insignificant. Populists emphasized that thanks to the innate, related to the community-based way of life, 'communist' qualities of the Russian peasantry, Russia would arrive at socialism through the community; the driving force behind this revolution would be the peasantry itself, led by the intelligentsia.

However, later, in the work 'Our Differences', which appeared in 1884, a final Plekhanov's break with populism occurred. In 'Socialism and the Political Struggle,' G.V. Plekhanov rationalized his idea of the possibility of Russia passing through the capitalist development phase. He arrives at the conclusion that in the political struggle one cannot rely only on the backward Russian peasantry, which can be led by the quantitatively insignificant revolutionary intelligentsia. It is necessary to admit the inevitability of Russia travelling the same path of development as the West, that is, the path of capitalism. The struggle for socialist system must be a matter of the working class, and the revolutionary elements of the intelligentsia can only help this process, facilitating the cause of the working class organizations for it to address its historic tasks.

The first Russian Marxists headed by Plekhanov insisted on the idea that the coming revolution could only be bourgeois, eliminating the antiquated tsarist regime. And since passing the stage of capitalism, according to Plekhanov, is inevitable, to that extent the Marxists would have to implant this capitalism themselves, endeavor to create the working class, to thereby obtain the material conditions necessary for the socialist system implementation. G.V. Plekhanov somewhat exaggerated the importance of the peasant reforms of 1861, assuming that they had destroyed the self-subsistent peasant economy and exposed the community 'to the power of all the laws of commodity production and capitalist accumulation'. Moreover, Plekhanov suggested that the reforms had modified the social essence of monarchy itself. 'Alexander II', Plekhanov wrote, 'was the tsar of bourgeoisie, exactly as Nicholas I was the tsar of soldiers and nobility'.

Despite the fluctuations in his theoretical views, the general conclusion by Plekhanov is as follows. The socialist organization of society implies two conditions, without which it is impossible to enter upon it. The first of these conditions is objective in nature and involves the economic relations of a country, first of all, the development level of productive forces. Another condition, which is closely related to the first one, is purely subjective, and refers to the producers themselves: the working class must understand and comprehend the opportunity of transition to socialism.

V.I. Lenin in his works 'What to do?'; 'The Development of Capitalism in Russia' considers the uneven development of capitalism in various countries and the

possibility to carry out a socialist revolution in a certain country. That is what happened in our country in October 1917. It was believed that the most advanced production relations would ensure progressive development of the productive forces. For nearly seventy years, the people were trying to solve this problem. However, the level of labor productivity in the Soviet Union lagged twice as much behind the developed countries, particularly the United States.

3. The Research Objectives

The desire to improve the efficiency of our economy caused the transition to purely market relations in the 1990s; one can say we stepped backwards to 70 years ago in terms of the nature of industrial relations. The productive forces did not receive a dynamic impulse from the ownership relations nature change as the basis for the new productive relations. At the same time, the distribution system existing in the USSR was broken. This led to a tremendous stratification of society, when 1% of the population disposed 70% of the country's income. The income inequality in the society led to the emergence of 'new' morality, unusual for the Russian mentality: 'nothing personal, it is just businesses. All the immorality of our time is in this formula.

To the Russian people, the idea of justice, the idea of truth has always been peculiar. This idea was briefly and clearly expressed by Saint Prince Alexander Nevsky: 'God is not in force, but in truth'. It is the pursuit of justice that led the Russian people to the events of 1917. Like legendary hero Danko by M. Gorky who tore his heart out and lit the way for people from the darkness, our country carried out an economic experiment on itself, sacrificing millions of lives. However, this experience was not for nothing, the idea of a new society remains extremely important as of today.

Theoretically, perhaps, G.V. Plekhanov was right; the level of economic development in Russia was not ready for a radical change in productive relations. Theoretical opponent of G.V. Plekhanov and the leader of the socialist revolution V.I. Lenin before his death in a circle of close friends and family was forced to admit: 'Of course, we have failed. We hoped to achieve a communist society as if by magic... We must clearly see that the attempt has been unsuccessful...' In his late works, specifically 'On Co-operation', he writes about the need for 'the rule of NEP is all we need'. For the long haul, it was proposed to change the point of view of socialism. The NEP was to have combined public ownership, government regulation, social security, etc. - everything that corresponds to the socialist principles, and the principles of free enterprise and trade, benefits, which corresponds to capitalism. Subsequently, these ideas were presented by J.K. Galbraith as the theory of convergence.

However, the realities of life often do not coincide with the theory. Nevertheless, even not a very satisfactory experience is of paramount importance for the global development of society. Thus, in 1929 - 1934, the world economy experienced the

Great Depression, whereas the Soviet Union was gaining unprecedented economic heft through industrialization of the country. J.M. Keynes, while enunciating his arguments in favor of the need to use the state to regulate the economy, in a sense, used the direct experience of the USSR.

The advantages of its social system allowed Russia to quickly put the economy on the war footing, relocating the defense industry over the Urals, ensuring the front supply with armament. In addition, many methods for the peaceful economic management in the USSR were adopted by developed countries. It is referred to public consumption funds, which in many countries are founded by means of progressive tax redistribution system between the rich and the poor, while providing the merit benefits gratuity (health, education). Finally, the very notion of a welfare state, so popular nowadays, stems from the practice of economic management in the USSR.

4. The Key Findings of the Study

Recognizing the theoretical correctness of G.V. Plekhanov (1956) one must not forget the worldly wisdom, ‘theory is barren everywhere, and the tree of life is flourishing!’ According to the authors, the future generations of our country, to paraphrase a line by A. Pushkin about Alexander I, would be able to say about the Soviet Union: ‘We shall forgive its unjust things, it took Berlin, it was the first to fly into space’. And these events will have global significance forever.

How on earth will the dispute of the great get resolved, what will be able to bring people together in the search for equality and justice, is it feasible to achieve this? The current economic system, with all its diversity (socially-oriented, mixed, corporate, social-democratic, etc.) is based on market relations (Sultanova and Chechina, 2016; Stroeva *et al.*, 2016; Pociovalisteanu and Thalassinos, 2008; Kormishkin *et al.*, 2016; Emelkina, 2016). The market is driven by the scientific and technological progress; a highly developed civilization has been created, over the past 100 years mankind has created unprecedented information networking system, stepped outside the earth. At the same time, market increasingly separates people in social terms; it contributes to their moral degradation. ‘Market zealously serves the rich, but is not in a hurry to serve the poor. It brings forth an anomaly: an excess of luxury housing and the lack of cheap housing, although the society’s need for the latter far outweighs the need for the former. It marshals resources and human energy to multiply luxury salable among the wealthier classes, while the much more pressing needs of the poor remain unmet.

This is not just an economic vice. It is a moral vice. Market economy promotes immorality (Heilbroner and Thurow, 1998; Akopova and Przhedetskaya, 2016; Shatkovskaya *et al.*, 2017; Filatova, 2016). To think that the immorality, burgeoning in Russia today, is a temporary phenomenon associated with the original accumulation of capital, which will be gradually overcome as the country moves to a

civilized market, is quite naive. That's what is written on this issue by the abovementioned authors: '...it helps to remember that inflation and unemployment, poverty and environmental pollution are to some extent products of the extremely viable, but irresponsible and even dangerous way of life, which it is the market that imparts to social processes'. 'Shopaholism', 'Black Friday sales', extensively promoted by our TV, actively invite our population to degradation. Enrichment, success - expensive houses, foreign cars, watches, and other appendage of wealth, are the meaning of life.

Z. Brzezinski, a leading ideologist of the American empire, in his book 'The Grand Chessboard', notes that the luxury consumption entails 'cultural degradation, political division, financial inflation'. Luxury corrupts a human spiritually. Veblen effect, born as a nominal phenomenon, is becoming crucial for assessing the significance of a person. Vanity and a gross overindulgence in gratification are the distinctive features of luxury. So clearly and simply were moral consequences of material excesses described by I.A. Goncharov (1957).

The market economy has brought humanity into a conscious deadlock, forcing it to 'stop and look back' to move forward. Thinking in a new way is a truly global call. With all the differences of countries and peoples, one thing that unites us all is our planet, our home, we are all in the same boat, and to keep it is the challenge for all the mankind. Endless market consumption has depleted the Earth's resources, polluted the human environment, both physically and morally ruined man themselves. The need of restructuring the human needs, their harmonization with the real possibilities that the impoverishing planet is providing people with is becoming more and more evident. XXI century is the space age of Aquarius; humanity has acquired sufficient experience to turn into the master from a slave and to determine the direction of its development at its own discretion.

Evolutionary processes are accelerated many times due to the increasing human activity in the course of the technical equipment of civilization. Uncontrolled, unguided development of human activities keeps on endangering the life on Earth. With the growing power of the modern industrial civilization, it is not only the empire of man over nature that increases, but also the empire of nature over man. The uncontrollable humanity can at any time cross the 'point of no return', beyond which, by the exponent law, an unforeknowable, unpredictable evolution of the natural environment will commence, where there will be no room for man.

For millennia man worshiped the force of Nature, without comprehending the essence of its power and their dependence on it. Modern man has incomparably more knowledge, although still insufficient to fully understand the drama of Life on our planet. Further evolution of the planet and the human society may be guided by the power of collective Intelligence, or with the help of the no sphere. V.I. Vernadsky (1991) used and developed this philosophical concept. According to him, without an intervention of the Intelligence, it is impossible to ensure harmony in the

development of the nature and society. Man will always adjust the environment for themselves. However, the problem is that this intervention must not take place spontaneously, but be controlled and directed by a sensible intelligence. Man, a child of nature themselves, its creation, has to be responsible for its condition.

The humanity, to secure their future, has to face a change of moral principles as deep as the one which took place at the dawn of human society. Switching the primitive people's codes of conduct to human morality rules lasted for millennia. In the modern context, a change in public consciousness, understanding the need for a new attitude to our common home Earth depends on the level of culture and education. Only an educated person can understand the true value of life, the human interrelatedness with the nature.

5. Conclusion

Both G.V. Plekhanov and V.I. Lenin were Marxists, and it is in communism or at the early stage in socialism where they saw the future of the humanity. The essence of Marxism was to create a classless society, appropriation of a surplus product by the whole society. However, the basic law of socialism consisted in most fully meeting the needs of all the members of society. The intention to meet the needs to the fullest extent possible would inevitably lead to the depletion of resources. Addressing global problems of today: nature and society, war and peace, social inequality, is closely linked to changes in consumption patterns.

The nature, the life on the planet should become a common cause for all countries and peoples. This is what the economy and politics should be subject to. The occurrence of Green political parties in almost all countries is no mere chance; their role is going increase in course of time. The world has one destiny, not two - for the rich and the poor; the planet will have a common destiny or none.

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