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 decreased not one bit during the years of perestroika. As before, supporters of Russian originality can cite, with pride, Tiutchev'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 train of permanent crises, has decreased considerably since Tiutchev's times).

This opinion becomes stronger during numerous meetings with foreigners, a feat 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 USA or Switzerland. They find out with great surprise, however, that they are basically in another planet's conditions, in an alien social and cultural environment which is reminiscent of the Solaris Ocean, from a novel by Stanislav 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 labeled the "evil empire" in the West not too long ago. But he also realizes that there were 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 Q-cards, finally acquired the Big Mac and the Pepsi-Cola, and left all the

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

Regardless, the shock of "not recognizing" for Russia's guests is very strong. It results from peculiarities in the Russian way of life and the goals of life's orientation and traditions of economic acts and 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. So they collide with unbelievable bureaucratic extortion or with delightful and truly childish unobliging partners who are accustomed to set business meetings not at 2 o'clock but at "some 2 o'clock." However, foreigners cleverly will not always evaluate unusual things in Russia as 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 alogism of life, which is connected with the human warmth and openness which regrettably the rationalistic civilization of the West 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 isn't the characteristic of Marxism in itself, 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 becoming very sharp in the ages of revolutionary changes.

In the Beginning Was the Word...

The first such trait is the extraordinary serious attitude of the Russian intelligentsia to the social theory institute—to 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 Philosophical 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, nor saw the Communist Party Congresses on TV? Does he realize that the country's economic dislocation and the political instability are the result not of a war nor a natural calamity nor 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 doesn't realize the historical interest to 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 "invisible hand" of the market 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 with 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 the 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 some 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 stably 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, and the conscience which understands that a careful and "short-sighted" following of the nearest visible interests of common people brings in the end more good and justice than Prometeian leaps towards the "common good."

It is evident that such mentality, personified by my American interlocutor, can lend itself to the ironic fact that the prevalence in society of global social theories 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.

It is easy to see that the fetishism of ideas in Russia 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, but ideas), a society where the day-to-day behavior of people in the political and economic spheres has always been under the huge 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 aspect of Russian history found its most complete realization during the Soviet period, when many people from professors to Lenin's cooks ** forgot Christianity and actually acquired Marxism as their new religion. The irony of fate is such that atheistic Marxism could produce such religion. Marx planned his teachings as strong scientific theory, preceding from the idea of a "natural historical" social movement according to the strong law of economic determination. So Marx most

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** Lenin once wrote that even a cook should be able to know how to govern the new Soviet state (ed.).
definitely would turn over in his coffin if he saw how a crowd of semi-literate people speculating about "being, determining conscience," started to shred 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 \textit{consciously}. In the process, a historically unprecedented forceful domination of ideas over life took place, 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 \textit{possibility}, but out of \textit{desire}. Despite the honest intentions of Russian politicians desiring to do good to their country, they faced two interconnected short-comings. From the one side, they did not have the type of intellectual modesty which prevents man from imagining himself as "all knowing and all powerful," 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 the First in \textit{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 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 only 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 \textit{étatism}—control the presence or absence of beards on people's faces, their style of clothes, regulate their sexual life, and so on. It is no wonder that the people actually remember rulers who know 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? 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 "right of doctor" 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, hyperbolical to Western tastes, interests in Marxism conveys 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 this peculiarity of the "mysterious Russian soul," which is short of the common joys of life; 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 could eat, drink and wear plentifully anyways) is of course not inherent to all Russians among whom there are quite enough—fortunately for us—"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

*** These last words belong to Marx (ed.).
of life" under the conditions of total shortages of everything. People of this idealistic type are not only old-fashioned intellectuals, but are even found among the new "bourgeoisie," many of whom, in the manner of the old Russian merchant class, are ashamed of their riches and try to underestimate them, and not just because they are afraid of extortioners or tax inspectors. You can find philosophers busily making reflections into 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 Ethics." Maybe dissatisfied idealization results in the sensationally excessive Russian drinking habit, which often strikes quite happy people who otherwise have no obvious causes to enter into this vice.

**Is It Good to be Sober?**

It must be said that it is popular nowadays in Russia to laud the West's pragmatic soberness, seeing in it only pluses. 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 the economic rationalism of money (which they equate with inequality and alienation), the romantic intention to jump over from the "realm of material necessity" to the "realm of existential freedom," plus 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, and not a have-not, who suffers from the absence of property and, hence, 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 this one is indeed seriously concerned about the people's welfare—must welcome the social consequences of Western pragmatism. But, doing justice to it, we should remember that the implantation of such mentality on 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 development, which worked according to the principle "the worse, the better." The worse the country's practical affairs were, the more so Russian thought stormed into transcendental heights of spirit with most zeal. This is exactly the fact in 19th century Russia, suffering from the relics of serfdom, lagging behind its European neighbors in any point of economic and political improvement. In that very Russia appeared an unprecedented export of art, and priceless chef-d'oeuvres were created, conquering 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 leading eventually 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 interpreting such 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 come out only against the naive idealization of one particular way of life and the total condemnation of another one. I come out for a true dialectics of history, which, regrettably, does not just allow people to obtain while not losing anything, or what it would not be desirable to lose. We should not see imagined, but real defects of the way of life which we are trying to adjust for ourselves. 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 could see Andrei Rublyov before Rambo and Terminator burst onto the screen, 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 can seriously deform culture. Now, scientists of the fundamental sciences are also making this sad discovery. But while the natural sciences have the opportunity of some defence, many humanities can perish indefinitely because they do not meet the canons of
pragmatic rationalism. I mean 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 fair means 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 very case when pragmatic rationalism turns and shows its defective side, doing harm not only to human culture but also to the very practice of social life. You see it discard 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 the mortal menace against the "homo sapiens" by the "homo faber," or if an antagonism were to grow between "world's town" and "world's country." So safe countries will find themselves at the turcation of history, and will have to adopt non-typical reactions to non-typical situations.

That is when they would need a deep philosophy of history, which will allow people to specify their own aim in life, to orientate themselves in a new reality which will exclude the automatic reproduction of habitual stereotypes of being. Let's hope that there will still be thinkers who will not turn to stock brokers, 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 to it on the part of the Russian intelligentsia becomes apparent in the form of unconcealed hatred, irate negation, malicious jeers
under the "ravings of a bearded maniac." Marx's ratings declined to less than zero. Now most intellectuals perceive Marx as a founder of Satanic theory, uniting pseudo-science with misanthropy; 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 it 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. Idiosyncracy on Marxism is natural if we also recall that the intelligentsia always took its 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, which is in reality a substitution of the previous hosannas which the now-democratic intelligentsia sang, on so spirited invectives provoke outrage from sober competent people—supporters of the same "objectivism" which Lenin replaced with the notorious "Party principle," which under new guise still prevails in the Russian mentality. Describing myself as a member of such objectivists, I can't 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 Carl").

First of all, as a man who is occupied professionally with social philosophy and theoretic sociology, I can prove that Carl 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 Kurkheim, but in some points excels 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 doesn't 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, quite often shared disbelief in the ability of scientists to realize their own political inclinations, and to block their influence in 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. When I read, for example, his discourses about the so-called "non-efficient labor" of the bourgeoisie or about exploitation as the norm of relationship between the workers and employers; about the classes doomed to antagonism but not to conflict interaction; about a state whose main function is not coordination but repression—I realized that Marx sat down at his desk with practically ready answers to very difficult questions, and as a scientist he only tried to mount conclusions dictated by his beliefs as a revolutionary.

This is the truth, but it does not mean that we cannot find some pearls of scientific truth amid the ideological "muck." It doesn't 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 disproving 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 in the epoch of industrial production. It managed for a time to annul private property and substitute it for 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
Marxism in Post-Totalitarian Russia

expediency for a contrived "ideological necessity."

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

The downfall of such regime, form a position of Karl Kautsky and Eduard 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 when it tries 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, can tell about the collapse of this doctrine.

Even with the best will in the world, you cannot break the law of gravity or the law of thermodynamics. A society, though, 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 by the idiotic calculations of Gosplan. But in so doing, people doom society to stagnation and cataclysms, to destruction in the short and long terms, to fail 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. This new theory will be founded, I hope, on the principle of natural sciences, offering a common field of problems with the greatest number of competing hypotheses. To answer life's questions, the scientific community will have to choose among the arguments of Marx, Sorokin, Talcott Parsons, Lewis Coser and others. The ideas of different sociologists, as we know, can supplement each other. So, 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

**** Stepan Razin was the leader of a strong and widespread Russian peasant uprising in the second half of the XVIII century.
any conditions of economic being a Japanese will remain Japanese, keeping his own unique mentality, 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 such kind of question because interlocutors quite often do not understand my position, consider me inconsistent or not sincere, and even afraid to admit my secret liking for communism. I will say right now that the ideology of "radical democracy," which prefers fabricated equality to freedom, is not intimate 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 receive the same wages as a tram-driver. It is also not intimate to me the ideology of "social architecture," which thinks it has the right to experiment with living people, in order to build the future "kingdom of good" from human fates. It is not intimate to me the ideology of "revolutionarism," the ideology of "social impatience;" which thinks that one surgical operation in the life of society is better than a long social therapy.

Nevertheless, I cannot consider the Communist ideology as false because I believe that systems of value judgement, as M. 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 of 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 if
ideology are directed to the wide circle of human preferences which
change from individual to individual, from party to party, form society to
society. Man, as M. Weber wrote, has a right to prefer blonde to brunette,
but does not have the right to make his choice absolute, to consider it the
truth and impose 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. The due, as 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 at all 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 got 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 the 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 this was indeed necessary. Taking this into account, I
wouldn't rush to affirm that revolution is an absolute evil, and
revolutionary ideology 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.

So is the case with the ideology of total equality. Certainly we realize
that such ideology hampers the real development of modern society,
hibernation of competent people 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 equally among all the meat which he fetched. The "incentive," unfortunately, could become the reason for someone's death by starvation before the economic laws dictate that more meat will be fetched.

Can we be sure that humanity will never come back to the times of leveling 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 leveling distribution psychologically. Until there are such people and 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 quite normal axiological construction, a set of ideas which contain nothing wittingly revolting. Though 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 curse 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 in Russia manifests itself today in the attempts of the total critics of Marx to remove him from the history of the country, as is being done with 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 in Russian, the word "truth" 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 the real life, which makes it very dangerous. I remember the paradoxical opinion that the Russians are the only one great people who could make a great state without an "instinct of statehood"; 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 take lessons 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.