

The Image of a Civilized Man in a Modern Culture

Zhumageldy Kenispaev
*Department of philosophy,
history, economic theory and
law*
Omsk state agrarian University
of P. A. Stolypin
Omsk, Russia
kenispaev@mail.ru

Vladislav Vakaev
*Department of philosophy
Altai State Pedagogical
University*
Barnaul, Russia
vlad_vak75@mail.ru

Vladimir Markin
*Department of philosophy
Altai State Pedagogical
University*
Barnaul, Russia
vmarkin@mail.ru

Natalia Serova
*Department of philosophy
Altai Branch of RANEP
Barnaul, Russia*
nsg03@mail.ru

Abstract— The word “civilization” comes from the Latin word “civilis” and literally means “civil”, “state”. But most often this concept is used in a broader sense and means a historical stage in the evolution of society, when it reaches a certain level of development. One of the criteria of civilization is writing, which is an effective way of transferring experience from generation to generation. But many nations of Siberia did not have their own written language in the past and in a certain sense found themselves outside of civilization. Therefore, their history is not adequately represented in the world scientific literature. For example, R. Collins, in his famous book *Sociology of Philosophy*, ignores this topic. Meanwhile, the task of overcoming Russia’s backwardness in comparison with European countries was formulated more than 300 years ago and since then our society has been striving to solve it by all means. The process of Europeanization of Russia continues for several centuries. Not surprisingly, in the minds of Russians, the ideal is the image of a Western civilized man. It seems to us that the existing criteria for human civilization should be reviewed, for which a critical analysis of this term is necessary. The tradition of critical analysis of scientific categories in the context of the “antibarbarus” principle has arisen for a long time and has a great history [1]. In this article we consider the concept of civilized man, through the prism of the “antibarbarus” principle. We do not set the task to study the evolution of this term or the traditions of its explication in science. The fact of using the term “civilization” in a positive sense as a factor indicating the degree of development of society is important to us. A civilized man, as a rule, is a person who understands the main trends of the modern world and who is literate, educated and cultural. The article provides a critical analysis of the concept of civilized man.

Keywords—*man, European culture, Russia, Siberia, civilization, society, history.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The lack of written language in the history of some nations is the reason for the difficulties that arise in the study of their culture, way of life and traditions. The history textbooks reflect well the cultures of European nations (Greeks, Romans, Franks, etc.) and the history of the Siberian, the Far East and the Far North nations is extremely scarce. The natives of Siberia are less known than the Greeks, not because they did not have significant achievements in culture, or they were not worthy to be in the book of world history, but only because the researchers did not have the opportunity to get acquainted with their written sources. In one of his speeches, Russian President Vladimir V. Putin, after a report by scientists on the study of cave paintings in the mountains of Spain, noted that he, as head of state, often travels to various regions of the

country and, in particular, in the Altai Republic, where you can see cave paintings drawings of the animal type of ancient artists. But scientists do not know about them, do not show due interest. These ancient testimonies of civilization remain outside the scope of researchers. The President of Russia noted that we do not yet know the full depth of our culture and history. In addition, the President added, scientists consider the Altai Republic to be the cradle of Turkic peoples. We have a lot of what we do not know yet. But this should be known [2].

As can be seen from this example, a lack of attention to Russian culture was noted at the highest level, which indicates the relevance of this problem not only in science, but also in the social consciousness. Moreover, the organization of studying the native country history, native land is one of the important state tasks of the modern education system of Russia. Thus, in our opinion, it is necessary to take a fresh look at Russia and its place in world civilization. The self-criticism of our fellow citizens in assessing their own national history, their morals and the past often goes beyond all reasonable boundaries and turns into outright fiction with a negative connotation. Comparing Russia with Europe, we often draw analogies that are not in our favor. It seems to us that such analogies are not true in principle, since they are based on a false premise of the existence of one “main” line of development for all civilizations. In fact, there are as many possible types of civilizations as there are cultures and nations. Even within the framework of our multinational Homeland, the most diverse forms of cultures, customs, traditions can and should coexist. Such diversity testifies to the strength, potential and power of Russia as a world power.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the image of a civilized man existing in modern culture. The view on European civilization as the main landmark of all other continents has been strengthened due to the spread of enlightenment, education and formation of a scientific worldview. A feature of European thought is the elimination of the natural foundations of man in the explanation of his spiritual qualities. As V. V. Cheshev notes, “higher motivations manifest themselves not as a product of historical evolution, but as something contained in the properties of the “spirit” and preceding it” [3]. Books written by European authors reflect their value system, which is gradually, but persistently imposed in the process of teaching the younger generations in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. We believe that in the ideological struggle of civilizations, Europe wins thanks to the written word, a skillful commercial approach and significant intellectual potential. Russia has already chosen

the European path of development, and this alien value system has for some time become familiar to us. We are familiar with the concepts of “democracy”, “egalitarian society”, “civil society”, “gender equality” and many others, which, no doubt, reflect the great achievements of mankind. But at the same time, we lost our understanding of our traditions, forgot our history, myths, heroes, gods and all that was the essence of cultures of the nations of Russia.

With all the advantages of the European way of thinking, one cannot think that it is the only possible one. It so happened that educated people keen on European teachings methodically began to “erase” their native history, culture, traditions from the nations’ memories and introduce new European values in their place. A person’s passion for new ideas often takes the form of fanatical worship. A similar point of view was expressed in the 19th century by the famous philosopher M. Stirner. “Fanaticism,” the philosopher writes, “is inherent mainly in educated people: a person is considered educated because he is interested in the spiritual, and the interest in the spiritual, if he is only alive, is fanaticism, and should be fanaticism; it is a fanatical interest in the sacred” [4].

At any cost, we want to become real Europeans, and we are doing everything so that the European family accepts us as their close relatives. But at the same time we forget that blind imitation of a foreign culture gives nothing but oblivion of one’s own. Analyzing such people’s aspirations regarding the essence of their own status, the German philosopher M. Stirner writes: “Not any sheep, not any dog tries to become a “real sheep”, “a real dog”; for the animal’s essence is not a task, or a concept that it must implement” [4]. In the Russian social mind, in order to be considered civilized, an individual must belong to European culture. The ephemeral ideals with which a person “becomes infected” while reading books, gradually replace the reality, and a kind of obstacle arises between the individual and the reality, which does not allow the person to adequately assess his position in space and time. In our opinion, a similar situation arose for some reason in our society. We know well the utopian ideals of European thinkers, but we know little of our own history. We recite Greek authors by heart, but are not always able to recall the names of Russian artists, philosophers, scientists. We are happy to learn from Western teachers, but we condescendingly relate to the centuries-old experience and wisdom of the Siberian nations, who for thousands of years have managed to survive in extreme conditions, as they had the proper level of knowledge. Shamanistic rituals, for example, are the quintessential knowledge of Siberian aborigines. The ancient religion of the natives of Siberia is behind this high human art, the drama of life, the open theater; it contains their philosophy, history, poetry, psychology and elements of all other branches of knowledge, which are represented as separate sciences in European culture. Some material evidence of this ancient culture still remained, and it was precisely about them that were discussed in the speech of President V.V. Putin. We believe that it is time to take a fresh look at the past of our homeland, in particular, at the history of Siberia, which is hiding many more mysteries and, without any doubt, interesting aspects for science. It is time to free ourselves from a biased Eurocentric view of Russia, its culture, past and the history of the nations that make up its wealth.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The main method of this study is the critical method, which allows you to take a fresh look at the established views on the categories of science. When a person is guided only by abstract concepts, and is not able to stay in a diverse living world, then he can rightly be called an idealist. The consciousness of the idealist is not able to distinguish between individual unique sides of life; he is fascinated by utopian illusions, prone to self-deception. Rushing to the “heights” of European culture, we do not notice how we trample on our own lawn with beautiful flowers, the seeds of which were preserved for us by previous generations. Instead of shining brightly with all the colors of the multinational rainbow, we paint ourselves gray so as not to stand out from the general European landscape. It seems to us that the words of the Russian philosopher perfectly describe this situation. “People are colorless,” writes N. G. Chernyshevsky, “who do not differ in anything special, do not have originality, almost never happen to be people in the true sense of the word: they vegetate, but do not live” [5]. We believe that the economic, political and other crises recurring in Russian society are connected with the fact that we have joined the rhythm of life that was set by the Europeans and is a consequence of the strategic mistakes of theorists regarding the nature of man himself.

The universally recognized idea of universal equality and happiness, which enchanted all of humanity, has its opposite side. The meaning of this idea is to make everyone equal in relation to the law and, if possible, equally happy. At first glance, the idea is the most humane, reflecting the essence of universal values. But everything changes when, in an effort to translate this idea into social space, people very freely interpret the concepts of equality and happiness. On this occasion, there is a popular proverb, according to which the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The philosophical meaning of this problem was formulated by N. A. Berdyaev, who claimed that the state was created not so much to create paradise on Earth, but to not turn it into hell [6].

Our critical analysis of certain categories is aimed at substantiating the thesis of the fallacy of total faith in abstract European ideas, which are the result of the rule of idealism. Implementation of the plan for liberation from the wrong attitudes of man, in our opinion, is connected with the general level of development of our society. V.S. Soloviev represented the specific dialectics of the individual and the public as follows. “A person, by virtue of his intrinsic infinity,” writes the philosopher, “can be completely and unconditionally in solidarity and inseparable from the public environment not in its given limitations, but only in its infinite integrity, which gradually manifests, while the general forms expand, rise and improve in interaction with single individuals” [7].

Expressing critical remarks on their own culture, our compatriot (as a rule, an educated person) does not even for a moment question the point of view of Europeans about the high status of their culture. Meanwhile, a monistic view of the world is one of the indicators of a person’s undeveloped worldview that does not allow the possibility of alternatives. The Western monistic view of the social world provokes the ideology of war, which aims to build a world order on a single European model. As a product of European colonial policy, the United States also professes the religion of war. This feature of American politics has been identified by many

philosophers, politicians, scientists, whose works have well-deserved authority. One of these researchers of Western culture is H. Marcuse. The German philosopher belongs to the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, whose representatives, after the Nazis came to power in Germany, immigrated to the United States, where they continued their studies. Observing from within the essence of American culture and politics, H. Marcuse reveals the aggressive essence of this social system. Moreover, aggression is covered by declarations of human rights, the protection of democracy, civil society and etc. Watching the reaction of ordinary Americans to the unleashed war in Vietnam and, in general, to the foreign aggressive policy of the USA, H. Marcuse notes: "I survived two world wars, but I do not recall such a shameless praise of the massacre. Even in the Nazi press, I have not seen anything like this headline: "The United States is satisfied with the absence of protests against the use of tear gas" (Los Angeles Times, September 9, 1965)" [8]. A similar critical method of analyzing some of the problems of modern civilization is the most common in science and philosophy.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

If antique wars were fought between different countries, each of them aspired to hegemony, then in the modern world there is one social system, uniting almost the whole world, and waging a merciless war with the remaining islands of a distinctive culture. Russia is one of the few non-conquered territories that lives according to its rules. But much in our society has already experienced European influence and has become contrary to centuries-old traditions. This is especially true of the education system, which is organized according to new standards. Russia has always been distinguished by the fact that education was more of a family nature than a formal business. Teachers that care deep for their work, sought not only to teach children the sciences, but also to educate them, instill the moral principles of life in society. At the same time, European culture created an education system that excluded similar familiarity. It seems to us that the lack of personal relations leads to alienation in the educational system. The formal fulfillment of teachers' duties and the transformation of their work into an office type of paperwork affect the younger generation, its attitude towards family, parents and their homeland. The general ideology of new trends is associated with the abstraction from family values and the transition to a system of civil law relations based on the principle of equality. Therefore, some part of the younger generation of our compatriots does not have the proper respect for the elders, for their parents, for the authorities. We believe that the idea of equality, with all its attractiveness, carries an additional meaning, which is not always obvious. If in traditional society sacred and profane worlds were distinguished, modern culture does not make such differences. Piety for the elders, respect for the symbols of the state and government representatives – these are signs not of European, but of eastern culture. These and other important qualities of a citizen were instilled in his students by Confucius, whose ideas influenced many generations of people. A similar respect for the symbols of the state for many centuries existed in Russia; until the beginning of the last century the revolutionary ideas of European thinkers did not change public consciousness. The desire for unification with the European world has turned Russia into a country with dominant anti-patriotic sentiments, into a society with an individualistic ideology.

A person living according to revolutionary ideals is alienated from his own history, culture and is completely assimilated in a foreign social space. He is confident that his homeland should be similar to the utopian models of society that European authors often wrote about. "Where the current society produces benefits conducive to raising the standard of living, alienation reaches such an extent that even the awareness of alienation is largely suppressed — individuals identify themselves with their being-for-others, in their own way" [8]. We can conclude that many ideals that have become stronger in our consciousness require a new understanding, a non-trivial view and critical analysis.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Lack of attention to our own history, lack of understanding of significance of the distinctive culture of Russia, as we see it, are the causes of many problems of modern society. Being a civilized person does not necessarily mean belonging to European culture, sharing their views and value system. The concept of civilization, which is associated with the idea of progress, has always been of particular importance in European culture. "The idea of progress – the upward development, improvement of a society," writes K. Kh. Momdzhyan, "played a huge role in the self-consciousness of European civilization" [9]. The ability to think gives self-esteem to a person and responsibility for his ideas and actions. Meanwhile, modern man, due to many circumstances, is not able to reflect on current events. The inability to grasp the main trends of our time in scientific terms is one of the reasons for its disorder. The consequence of this is social disasters, from time to time shaking the foundations of society and the country in various regions. This leads not only to physical suffering, but also to spiritual transformations, to degradation of human qualities, which are replaced by primitive instincts. Impersonal forms of social life of the modern era are the causes of political and other apathy of a person, his depressed state. A process associated with an understanding of the deep disunity of people, the lack of previous spontaneity and mutual assistance is going on in the mind of a person. A theoretical understanding of such situations is possible within the framework of science and philosophy, which in society perform the function of a rational explanation of the world. In the age of globalization, when many ethnic groups, languages and cultures have disappeared in a relatively short historical period of time, the ability of a person to maintain his individuality is of particular importance.

A significant contribution to development of the topic of cultural self-identification of a person was made by the German philosopher G. Leibniz, who believed that the spatio-temporal characteristics are not enough to understand the essence of the individual. His dynamic concept of a man is based on recognition of the internal activity of individual being. According to G. Leibniz, individuality is associated not with external property of the extension of bodies, but with their internal content: each unit of being acts as an integral, self-contained spiritual essence. According to the German philosopher, monads are genuine individuals that form the entire diversity of the world. Monads have an internal source of their activity, due to which they gain their own being, freedom and independence of individual existence. Monads in the teachings of G. Leibniz are endowed not only with initiative, but also with their exclusivity and uniqueness. In a certain sense, such autonomy is inherent in every culture, and

the criterion of its evolution is the moral improvement of a person.

Another German philosopher I. Kant believed that the basis of culture is the morality, which ideas are inherent in human nature itself. Differences between people in the degree of their morality are associated with subjective perceptions of this imperative. The human mind is not always able to free itself of various prejudices that prevent it from seeing the real situation. Describing the external manifestations of European virtue, the German philosopher turns his attention to the formal process of formation of moral qualities of a person of this culture. I. Kant is convinced that the idea of human history is realized not in the interval of one generation, but in the course of a long evolution of society. Therefore, in our opinion, it is too early to talk about the complete victory of Western values in Russia. Indeed, since the New Age, the role of European culture in world history has become significant, but it is still not able to assimilate all neighboring cultures. It seems to us that the migration wave that has swept Europe and resembles another “great migration period” is a kind of response to the long, mostly violent period of Europeanization of the Asia, Africa and Latin America countries. The nations of the former European colonies, having lost their historical roots and original cultures, rushed for a new life in Europe, which was not ready for such a turn of events.

The abovementioned arguments allow us to assert that it is necessary to conduct a kind of revision of the basic scientific concepts and principles of social life in each historical period. Such a critical analysis aims at formulating the ways of social life that are adequate to the time and traditions of a given society. The habit of Russians to measure their lives by European standards has a long history; it is rooted in our minds. But it seems to us that prejudice should be gradually and methodically disposed. The critical analysis conducted in

this article was aimed at a new way, from a special point of view, to show the essence of the “civilized man” phrase. In our opinion, one should consider a civilized person as one who knows the history of his homeland, shows due respect for the society in which he lives, for the symbols of state power and in every possible way seeks to increase the authority of his homeland. In other words, one should go from the external formal signs of civilization to its substantial part, which reflects the essence of a truly civilized person.

REFERENCES

- [1] Zh. K. Kenispaev and N.S. Serova, “Antibarbarus: preliminary remarks.” *Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i yuridicheskie nauki, kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedenie. Voprosy teorii i praktiki* (Historical, philosophical, political and legal sciences, cultural studies and art history. Questions of theory and practice), No. 3(89), 2018, pp. 79-82. (in russ.)
- [2] V. V. Putin, About cave paintings in Altai Mountains (From a speech) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll76JLRCDXc> (in russ.)
- [3] V. V. Cheshev, “The Anthropological Meaning of the Category of Activity,” *Voprosy filosofii* (Questions of philosophy), No. 2, 2016, pp. 22-32. (in russ.)
- [4] M. Stimer, *The Only and his property*, Kharkov: Basis Publ., 1994. (in russ.)
- [5] N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Anthropological principle in philosophy: Works in 2 volumes*, Moscow: Thought Pul., 1987. (in russ.)
- [6] N. N. Berdyaev, *The philosophy of inequality*. https://royallib.com/read/berdyaev_nikolay/filosofiya_neravenstva.html#266240 (in russ.)
- [7] V.S. Soloviev, *Favorites*, Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopedia, 2010. (in russ.)
- [8] H. Marcuse, *Critical theory of society*, Moscow: Astrel Publ., 2011. (in russ.)
- [9] K. Momdzhyan, “The Hypothesis of Social Progress in Modern Social Theory,” *Voprosy filosofii* (Questions of philosophy), No. 10, 2016, pp. 36-46. (in russ.)