



1. Letter, November 2020

Marxism, Philosophy of Praxis and the Concept of Praxis

Dear friends of political philosophy,

with occasional letters, I would like to contribute to the socio-political debate and orientation in the many and varied but unfortunately still all too scattered activities for a better world. Writing in the form of a letter challenges us to express ourselves briefly and clearly. For example, a single sentence in the 1843 letter "M. to R." expresses the whole understanding of Marx and the meaning of the work in my philosophical think tank. Marx to Ruge: "For our part, it is our task to drag the old world into the full light of day and to give positive shape to the new one."

If you want to do this, you cannot just get straight to the point. Economic growth and the environment, the tax and financial system, democracy and inequality, public debt, the privatization mania, as well as infrastructure, social and health problems, surveillance capitalism and cultural life, the role of the nation and the EU, the capitalist world system and global problems of all kinds form an explosive mixture. Before problems can be solved in detail, the whole scenery must be illuminated to get an overview and know where you stand:

Marx designed the original illumination system required for this work. Thereafter tremendous efforts followed to illuminate the world under the banner of "Marxism": In the period of industrial capitalism, through the momentous Russian Revolution, the social-capitalist reformation in the 20th century and the collapse of the socialist experiments, to the completion of the world market in the wake of neoliberal globalization. All of this led to the current period of societal and historical transition. In the current world crisis scenario, a multipolar reorganization is taking place, with geopolitical and systemic tensions between the USA, China and Europe. How and where can the right path be found?

Over the course of two centuries, Marxism branched out into many hardly manageable schools of thought. The core of Marxism was correctly identified as "Philosophy of Praxis" but this school of thought did not prevail. Instead of getting behind this integrative position, we are faced with the division into social-philosophical approaches, critical social theories, political-economic criticism of the system, and a multitude of different reformation and alternative endeavors. This splitting robs all sides of the impact force. All these alternatives want to be socio-ecological, but the decisive economic system alternative and the connecting, inspiring spiritual center are missing.

"Marxism" is therefore today only the *name* of the rose, which refers to the *genuine* blossom of dialectical practical thinking: The clarification of "praxis" in its socio-ontological depths, about the economics of capital and fundamental social problem constellations, not least about the real perspective of a higher civilization. This union of practical materialism, dialectical idealism and revolutionary humanism marks the most important turning point in intellectual history. However, even 150 years later there are still and always new "unsolved tasks of socialist theory".

So far, there is no full clarity about the "dialectic" and the philosophical-scientific foundations of the system opposition. The theory of capital, the basic building block of Marx's transformation-theoretical science of political economy, runs in endless loops of capitalism criticism. Thus, no concrete socio-economic alternative came into sight, the fragmentation of progressive ideas and initiatives was facilitated, and the defeats and de facto withdrawal of left politics into social-democratic piecemealism were encouraged. How can we overcome the crisis of Marxism and the loss of strength of the social left?

Already in the seventies, a "further development of Marxism" was called for, but not really achieved. In this sense, the "concept of praxis" stands for fully elaborating the dialectical practical thinking as principal conception of reality and type of science, identifying the system alternative that crystallizes "in the bosom" of modern social capitalism and conducting the debate on social evils from this perspective. What next? A war of positions and distribution between classes, between below and above in society hardly leads out of the trenches. What is needed is a co-active and collective effort to help the urgent new form of society see the light of day, whereby the emancipative forces can come together.

To achieve this a greater mental effort is needed. After half a century of neoliberal brainwashing considerable mental blocks have to be solved. Especially the alternative economy as well as the human perspectives must be elaborated and have to be made much more recognizable! Hence, the importance of "theory" for a solidary "praxis" focussing the question, the concrete situation and global circumstances. It is necessary to position an informed and emancipated "thinking of praxis" in terms of dialectical contradictions and substantially future-oriented. All this means a profound "world philosophy", which stands against all stultification and against liberalism as hegemonic, unsocial ideology and global culture.

Best regards,
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