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Mihailo Marković on Conservatism²

Abstract

This paper focuses on an analysis of political and scientific reflections by academic Mihailo Marković, with special review of the links existing between ideology and science. Unlike ideology, whose scope is limited in terms of value and science, Mihailo Marković regards philosophy as a science open to all humankind. A prominent place in Marković's research belonged to the conservative ideology and in this context, distinction was made between the conservative spirit in its broader sense, manifested in its views on art, creation and all other segments of life and conservatism as an ideological and political position. The aim of this paper is to explore Mihailo Marković's approach to the value system proposed by conservative ideology, leading to the author's conclusion that Marković had an objectively critical approach in his analysis of conservatism. Marković discovered a humanistic alternative to all forms of conservatism, proposing radical democratic socialism as a appropriate substitute model.

Key words: Mihailo Marković, conservatism, ideology, theory, science, political thought, political theory, tradition.

Introduction

It is fair to suggest that Mihailo Marković is one of the most prominent 20th century philosophers, not only in Serbia but also within

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world science.³ His extensive body of research includes the analysis of conservative ideology, among various other political categories. Mesmerised by left-wing ideas of freedom and equality as a young man, Marković captured the deficiencies of rigid conservative views early and criticized and explained the phenomenon of conservatism in his writings accordingly.

As a political programme, conservatism initially appeared in Western European countries in mid-nineteenth century, but it was only later, in Edmund Berk's 1970 book : *Thoughts on French Revolution*, that the conservative thought was explicitly revealed for the first time. The etymology of the word itself (lat. *conservare*) points to a tendency to preserve and to hold on to something that has been functioning in a human society regularly and for a long time.

Conservative thought in its essence strives to conserve the *status quo* due to its fear of change that is unpredictable, new, untested, while its greatest fear is the „trepidation of losing the acquired social status through change“ (Marković 2002: 216). Therefore, it is not surprising that in all established societies, proponents of the conservative spirit are the dominant classes and elites, by which Marković implies: big bourgeoisie, feudal aristocracy, political and military bureaucracy, the clerical class and apologetic intelligence are the keepers of conservatism. In conservative ideology, Marković discovers the existence of human self-interests predisposed by psychological and cultural factors, such as love for traditional values, true religiousness, romanticism in idealising the past, etc.

Mihailo Marković did not reject every segment of the conservative spirit and thought, but he did largely criticize conservatism shaped as ideology, mainly since the „ideological phenomenon is not characterized by the secrecy of opinion and conflict of opinion and its public expression, but by the fact that thinking does not come from the mind, is not open to rational, critical reconsideration, nor universally applicable to all people in different specific circumstances of their lives.“ (Marković 1994: 183).

Mihailo Marković particularly criticized the ideological myth that is directly incorporated in all types of ideologies, claiming it to be the enemy of the humanistic praxis. In his analysis of ideological myths, he highlights their dominant function – that

3 Two of his books, *Dialectical Theory of Meaning* and *Philosophical Foundations of Science* were translated into English and are considered as important philosophical works in world science.

of obscuring the actual social relations with a thick veil and substituting the truth with illusion. Myth is a weapon of the conservative forces which “by repeating the same stereotypes at will, shape people’s spirit, feelings, needs” (Marković 1994: 118).

In order to understand ideology, it is necessary to elucidate its relationship with science, complex in its nature. Although he always prioritized science as objective cognition, or, to put it in Hegelian terms, as an „absolute spirit“, Mihailo Marković believed that ideology held a special place in a man’s reality. In discussing the phenomenon of ideology, Marković made a distinction between conservative thought and praxis, searching for a humanistic alternative to all forms of conservatism and proposing radical democratic socialism as a adequate substitute model.

Ideology and science

From the beginning of his academic work, Mihailo Marković showed an interest in science, logic and philosophy, but at the time when the journal *Praxis* was founded, his attention shifted into the areas of political theory and political philosophy. During the latter phase associated with the *Praxis*, Marković was mostly engaged in critical theory of society and in understanding human nature in „non-normative, or descriptive terms“ (Živanović 2010: 121).

Although he remained devoted to science until the end of his life, in terms of political practice, Mihailo Marković stayed committed to his left-wing ideological beliefs. His *logos* often balanced between ideology and science and hence, his works were inspired by these phenomena.

In contrast to the constraints of the phenomenon of ideology and its limitations in terms of value and science, Mihailo Marković viewed philosophy as open towards the whole world and humankind „even when it is an expression of a very special human situation and work of a unique individual“ (Marković 1994: 183).

In keeping with Fichte’s saying – *By philosophy the mind of man comes to itself* – Mihailo Marković also lived by his own philosophy, despite the troubles and consequences he faced, since it was the only way for „the unity of theory and praxis“ to materialise (Marković 1988: 27). This kind of Mihailo Marković’s life philosophy corresponds to Gramsci’s distinction „between philosophies that spring

from other philosophies and philosophies deriving from life, so to speak, that is, from *a significant lived experience*“ (Marković 1994: XIII). Academic Mihailo Marković belonged to the latter group.

Marković was right in observing that views on the relationship between science and ideology are often simplistic, along the lines of true and false. Accordingly, ideology would be synonymous with „distorted conscience“, untruth or political demagoguery. But actually, the relationship between science and ideology is much more complex in nature than it appears at first glance since, in addition to the scientific truth, considered as the only valid one, there is also the so-called “ideological truth“. Or, as Stojanović and Pavlović wrote on the subject: “Transforming scientific truth into ideological match or equating them, even when it is presumed that the truth is non-existent (...) is in fact a way for an ideological truth to become scientific” (Stojanović, Pavlović 2015: II).

Today, different definitions of science are available, but the most common one defines it as synonymous for knowledge. According to Hegel, science is „conceiving knowledge of absolute spirit (...). It is a term which consists and conceives itself“ (Hegel 1985: 212). A similar definition is provided by Mihailo Marković who suggests that „all real knowledge, i.e., all objectively verified knowledge is comprised by science” (Marković 1985: 62), and hence, no other superior form of knowledge acquisition exists. By placing science on the pedestal of knowledge, Marković remarks that science has its own tasks to fulfill (constructing and testing of hypotheses and scientific predictions), which transcend the borders of practical intelligence. Another important feature of science is that it constructs theories that help to explain reality.

Scientific theory is “scientifically based, reasoned and systematized, and therefore corroborated by theoretical arguments and such empirical facts that yield to analysis and so can serve as its basis and testing ground” (Simeunović 2009: 31). In this paper, special focus will be on the correlation between political theory (as an intrinsic component of science) and ideology.

Etymologically, the term *theory* originates from the Greek word *theoria*, which can be translated as contemplation, not just any but that which aims „at conceiving the true and the essential” (Simeunović 2009: 30). According to Simeunović, the creation of theory is explained by three reasons. First, man as a curious being shows his desire for knowledge, which inevitably leads to a feeling of happi-

ness. The second reason for the construction of theory is existential in nature, as it refers to the preservation and improvement of life, and the third reason is explained by man's curious nature which aims Klaus von Beyme in his work asserts that political theory is the opposite to ideology (Von Beyme 2002: 59). Radoslav Ratković shares the same view, considering that science „as a relatively autonomous form of social consciousness” (Ratković 2009: 188) does not correspond with ideology. However, Ratković sees the relationship between science and ideology as a complex one: “Scientific thinking – as long as there is grounds for ideological thinking – cannot be disengaged from ideological elements” (Ratković 2009: 188). On the other hand, ideological thinking may completely disregard scientific elements. It is because of such a complex relationship between science and ideology that Ratković believes the relationship between science and ideology to be a process that cannot be reduced to a formal logical formula (Ratković 2009: 189).

Through a comparative analysis of ideology and science one may arrive at a conclusion that these two terms are interdependent. Although Marković prioritized science in the cognition of truth, he was aware of the ideological influence on not only society as such, but also on the scientific domain of research. One of the ideologies that no doubt had a great impact on the shaping of various social processes in the past and present and which was the subject of Mihailo Marković's criticism, was conservatism.

Critics of conservative ideology

David Mc Lellan is right in claiming that ideology is the most elusive phenomenon in social sciences.⁴ Regardless of this assertion, ideology occupies a prominent place in political theory, as evidenced by the proliferation of papers on the subject. Given the uniqueness of the ideology phenomenon, Mihailo Marković paid it considerable attention, which can be seen in his work *Ethics and Politics*.

Marković made a distinction between the *conservative spirit* in its broadest meaning, manifested in its views on art, creation and in all segments of life, and *conservatism as an ideological and political stance*. The word ideology itself was initially used by Destutt de

4 See more in: Mc Lellan, David, *Ideology*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 1996.

Tracy in 1796 in his lecture, and later in *Elements of Ideology* (1801-1807) and it is, as Marković notes, contradictory in character. For him, although there are dozens of definitions of this phenomenon, he points to a few basic interpretations.

The first group of interpretations is close to de Tracy's original interpretation of ideology as a form of exact science "which studies the ways ideas are constructed" (Marković 1994: 185). According to the second type of interpretations, ideology is conceptualised as a kind of social upgrade, which corresponds to Marx's and Mannheim's comprehension of ideology.

The third interpretation of ideology in Marković's view, granted, an overly narrow one, is provided by Marx and Engels in *German Ideology* and it perceives ideology as a false social consciousness. The main goal of this book was criticism of the German idealistic philosophy and contemplative historical idealism. Marx and Engels intended in a way to "come to grips" with idealism and replace it with historical materialism. Their primary starting point is the fact that man differs from other beings for his consciousness, but that humans became a separate species "as soon as they started producing their life assets" (Marx, Engels 1956: 20). By explaining ideological consciousness and conditions conducive to its development, Marx and Engels established a materialistic conception of history in which – social being determines social consciousness.

Marx and Engels were mainly resented for showing inconsistency in their elaboration of ideology as this term often had different meanings in their different works. Thus, it is quoted that in some works they termed ideology „wrong consciousness“, while in others it was synonymous with the „conceptual upgrade“. For example, Stalinist-oriented theoreticians mostly perceived ideology as a „conceptual upgrade“. Lenin perceived ideology as a set of ideas of some class which could advance its position in society. Marx negated ideology believing that the thoughts of the "exploiting class" were, at the same, the ruling ideas in a given era, and thus regarding ideology as a "false worldview".

The Marxist concept of ideology was additionally developed by Antonio Gramsci, who believed that the capitalist system is perpetuated through economic exploitation of labourers, political power and bourgeois ideology. Gramsci believed that the power of ideology was extremely high, since it exercised influence on the overall social life, including politics, economy, art and culture.⁵

5 See more in: Gramsci 1959.

Only in the 20th century would ideology be discussed from an objectively scientific point of view thanks to Karl Mannheim, who wrote a well-known piece *Ideology and Utopia*. Mannheim analysed the phenomenon of ideology with the help of sociology of knowledge, by which he finagled its gnoseological neutralization.

There is also a fourth interpretation of ideology, which regards a given social reality through dualist consciousness: it either idealizes or exerts destructive influence on it. The last, fifth interpretation, points to the social function of every ideology which tends to “mobilize for defence or attack, integrate the addressed group, provide value benchmarks and give meaning to global political activity” (Marković 1994: 189).

In his philosophical and theoretical reflections, Mihailo Marković clearly observes that all ideologies, including conservatism, are dangerous, because they „create illusions and prejudice“. Aside from this, they are conservative since “they serve the interests of the social elite, being too static and vitally lagging behind the actual social occurrences” (Marković 1994: 208). Even though ideologies are based on distorted, wrong consciousness, and are antagonistic to science, which is an “objectively, critically, methodically deduced knowledge” (Marković 1994: 13), they always attempt to vindicate and legitimize themselves.

Academic Marković believed that legitimizing the conservative ideology is first realized thanks to anthropological pessimism. Namely, “man is allegedly a fragile, unstable, restless, but also cruel, greedy being” in the conservatives’ view (Marković 2002: 216) and hence, the only good is that which was developing gradually and for a long time and which passed the test of history.

The next commonly used argument in favour of the need for conservatism, as Marković noticed, is the “thesis on the indefinite complexity of history” (Marković 2002: 216). This thesis proposes that there are hardly any rules and laws in history and that human behaviour is unpredictable, so projects of the future are uncertain and dubious. All this implies the conclusion that, owing to such an understanding of man and history, progress in human society is impossible and, by analogy, radicalisation of society should be avoided by all means.

The basis of every ideology consists in ideas seeking to materialize in practice. Depending on the nature of these ideas, ideologies of one society can be constructive or destructive. If one is aware

that every action and initiative is preceded by mental strain which consequently generates ideas, it becomes clear how significant their role may be in achieving certain political goals.

The world of ideas can be found even in Plato's *State* where he wrote that beyond the world of senses, there is a constant and eternal "world of ideas" (Platon 2005). According to Plato, ideas are timeless, unchangeable entities that represent models, i.e. ideals after which material things are fashioned. They are elements of ontological reality, pre-images according to which demiurge created the world. Everything that exists in the tangible world, according to Plato, firstly emerges based on an idea, from which comes a conclusion that all material things are just mere reflection of original ideas. As ideas do not reside in material world, they cannot be seen, but can onl

In Marković's view, ideas that form the conceptual framework of conservatism include: continuity, tradition, duty, discipline, inequality (Marković 2002: 215). Conservatism pays particular attention to tradition, however archaic, since it is "the only pledge of stability and sole barer of wisdom" (Marković 2002: 215).

Conservatism emerged as a reaction to liberalism and revolutionary social developments during the 18th century. It was precisely for these reasons that conservative ideology is often called reactionary – a term coined by revolutionaries. Although Berk was its main advocate, the 19th century successors of this idea were *Joseph de Maistre* and *Louis de Bonald*. Conservative ideology was upheld by the aristocracy's fear of losing their privileged position and material standing in society, so most of its representatives came from the ranks of aristocracy.

While it is true that conservatism emerged in reaction to liberalism, we can nonetheless observe some convergences "in support to market economy, struggle against communism or at present against Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, and in general against everything that threatens the existing order in general" (Simeunović 2009: 122), while the main dividing line lies in that liberalism favours the individual principle in terms of social freedoms and rights, while in conservatism social position, as well as human rights, are subject to competences and origin as the basis for the establishment of the elitist principle.

Conservatives in essence seek to conserve the *status quo* as they fear of change that is unpredictable, new, untested, while the gre-

atest of all fears is their anxiety of losing the existing social status through change. Hence, it is not surprising that in all established societies, proponents of conservative spirit are dominant classes and elites, such as big bourgeoisie, feudal aristocracy, clerical class and apologetic intelligence. The reasons for someone's preference for conservative ideology, according to Mihailo Marković, might even be entirely personal (psychological and cultural factors), such as love for traditional values, true religiousness, romanticism in idealising the past, etc.

When it comes to politics, from the conservatives' point of view it is perceived as a technique (*techne*) passed down from one generation to the next generation of the ablest individuals, that is to say, aristocracy, in Mihailo Marković's view. Such a view of conservative politics was regarded by some theorists as traditionalism, which they elaborated as a special type of ideology (Tadić 1972).

For the purpose of this research, it is worth mentioning that Marković insisted on comparative analysis of conservatism vs. liberalism and radicalism. First, these are three fundamental orientations in contemporary political thought which can be conceptually delineated as types of thinking and action. In his book *Ethics and Politics*, Mihailo Marković points that "some elements of liberalism and conservatism might become conservative, just as conversely, in some situations, the insistence on continuity of the course of history, on the need to preserve specific traditions, on responsibility for the long-term impacts of our projects, on maintaining the social stability and harmony, might play a progressive role" (Marković 1994: 230). Here we see that Marković's approach to analysis of conservatism is not one-sided and that, despite dismissing specific segments of this ideology, there are principles that might be considered expedient for humanity.

In the comparison between liberalism, radicalism and conservatism, it is especially difficult to differentiate the relation between moderate conservatism and some variants of neoliberalism. Both options support free market economy, seeking to diminish the role of the welfare state, struggle against communism and insist on militarization of society. However, differences are evident because, while liberalism insists on the individual freedoms and rights, conservatism is immanently elitist and aristocratocentric. Marković believes that, conservatism experienced a kind of defeat from liberalism between 1830 and 1880, by accepting the concept of parliamentary

democracy. And while conservatism does not believe in the possibility of progress of humanity, liberalism eschews this thesis believing that a man can prosper due to his primordial desire for freedom and self-affirmation.

The differences between conservatism and radicalism are visible at a glance: “One tends to preserve, the other to change from the roots; one emphasises continuity, the other – discontinuity of history, one rejects the idea of social equality, the other prints it on their combat flags” (Marković 2002: 217). The very etymology of the names suggests a contradiction of the two concepts. While conservatism involves the preservation and safeguarding of the tried and tested traditional values, Latin word *radix*, whose primary meaning is root and radicalism its derived form, denotes changes from the root, qualifying the two phenomena as two opposed poles.

A specific problem arises in the analysis of hybrid phenomena, as in the case of radical conservatism, by which Marković means Nazism and fascism, which reinstate traditional social relations of superiority and subordination, blind loyalty and irrationality. Albeit radical or “root” changes, they are not emancipatory in character so as to allow the progress of society, but are based on authoritarianism and spiritual degradation of man. A further aggravating circumstance in defining fascism is the very perplexity of the author as to whether conservatism should be understood so widely as to include fascism as one of its extreme forms, or if it would be better to introduce a separate term for defining reactionary thought and practice. Marković saw fascism as an ideology which “uses the most brutal forms of violence in order to prevent further development of class conflicts and which aims to mobilize all social classes in order to fulfil extreme national and racial interests” (Marković 1994: 215).

Particularly dangerous for Marković is transforming radical thought into its total opposite, i.e. conservatism. An example for this is the case of revolutionaries who stop half-way and “instead of continuing their struggle for the full realisation of their own radical project, instead of seeing the conquered ground on the way to human liberation as the base for their further efforts, they falter, fixating themselves in the past, in the outdated past rituals, in duly paid credits, in mythologizing events and characters in the short history of their own movement” (Marković 2002: 218). Mihailo Marković criticized this kind of radical-conservative transformation because radical theory no longer conforms to practice. His conclusion

is that we should distinguish between the theory and practice of conservatism.

In Marković's view, there are different classifications of conservative ideologies in scientific literature. Thus, for example, we can find classical conservatism, conservative nationalism, conservative liberalism, conservative technocracy and conservative socialism (Tadić 2007: 415).

Classical conservatism, which emerges in reaction to the French revolution, guarded the achievements of the aristocratic society and criticized enlightenment. De Maistre, for example, asserted that "aristocracy is sovereign and ruling by its essence". Classical conservatism featured a strong preference for Christianity and religion in general, organizing society by organicistic principles.

Conservative nationalism placed nation, without which an individual could not exist, on the pedestal of its values. All nations aspired to states of their own and hence the idea of conquering or liberation wars in which every nation would gain the state they deserve, as a confirmation of its "maturity".

According to Tadić, conservative liberalism advocates classical moderation which can be found as early as with Aristotle. This strand in the conservative ideology stood for the so-called "enlightened conservatism" and philosophical scepticism.

Conservative technocratism is guided by the following intention: to reconcile progress and order. We encounter such ideas in the works of Auguste Comte, and we come across some typical conservative-technocratic ideas in the anthropological works of Arnold Gehlen. In his perception, the basis of an orderly society lied in institutions, and changes were allowed only if serving as means for the "stabilizing" of society. In addition to „stabilization“, he also mentioned the phenomenon of the "crystallization" of society, which can be defined as some kind of cultural integration. In the "technical state", there would be a depolitization of the individual, who would no longer be capable of independent decision-making, thus supporting the thesis on the incompatibility of democracy and technocracy.

Hybrid merging of conservatism and socialism could be treated as a separate strand in conservative ideology, known as conservative socialism. This form of conservative ideology is believed to owe its emergence to revisionism and reformism, though in our view, this strand is closer to socialist than to conservative ideology.

According to Haywood, conservative ideology ramifies in several directions, so we can distinguish authoritarian conservatism (including Nazism and fascism), paternalistic conservatism, libertarian conservatism and new right-wing, emerging in the 1970's.

There is no firmly set and established classification of conservatism in academic circles, but the fact remains that conservatism is one of the oldest ideologies, which has been adjusting to social trends, while keeping its fundamental characteristics. Knowing that conservatism is a "phoenix-ideology", constantly renewing itself, Marković framed his classification based on its historical development.

Academic Marković believed that the genesis of contemporary conservative thought could be divided into three phases of development. In the first phase at the beginning of the 19th century, conservative thought opposed bourgeois revolutions and aimed to preserve aristocratic socio-political systems, achieving minor successes in France and other parts of Europe. And while in the first phase the main enemy of conservatives was Jacobinism, in the second phase these were communism and socialism. This phase in the development of conservative thought involves right-wing liberalism, meaning the defence of *laissez-faire* capitalism from the workers' movement.

At the beginning of the 20th century, conservatism had no answers to many questions, which rendered it weak and vulnerable. For example, it failed to suppress the Russian revolution, but also to offer adequate solutions for the 1929 crisis. During that period, as Marković notes, conservatism is compromised due to cooperation with fascist movements, which only strengthened the position of the communist movement. But still, conservative thought in this phase shows a phoenix-like, incredible power of revival, so it finds new strength in opposing the heavy bureaucratic state internally and Soviet communism in the foreign policy arena.

During the third phase, starting in the 1970s, conservatism gained dominance in many countries. Above all, "Reganomics" in the United States and "Thatcherism" in Great Britain have a significant influence on the spreading of modern right-wing movement in the shape of neo-conservatism, implying a massive shift of the middle classes to the right. And while globally one part of conservatives aims to renew traditional capitalism, others aim to conserve "real socialism", which represents two different ideologies. Their similarities are militarism in the form of military interventions world-wide,

favouring technics and technology and irresponsibility for the quality of life of ordinary people. Both these types of contemporary conservatism, according to Mihailo Marković, resulted in a deep social crisis.

Conservative thought in Yugoslavia

As a left-winger and a patriot, academic Marković also examined the phenomenon of conservatism in our region, analysing the conservative thought in Yugoslavia very objectively, from the point of view of “critical social science”. The phrase critical social science, as contained in his book *Ethics and Politics*, implies an approach “that subjects conservatism and other contemporary ideologies to criticism” (Marković 1994: 237). This is actually the method of contrasting scientific truth with the semi-true information in ideology. It is about the relation of truth and science on the one hand, and semi-truth (or even untruth) and ideology on the other.

Just after World War Two and the victory of Partisan revolutionary forces, not only conservatism but also “liberalism of non-compromised civil political organizations, intellectuals and entrepreneurs” (Marković 1994: 235). Along with embracing the Soviet model of the state system in general, Yugoslavia also embraced “the elements of the kind of conservatism that was already largely established in the Soviet Union under Stalin” (Marković 2002: 220). Despite considerable theoretical legacy of socialism (for example, Svetozar Marković’s idea of self-governance), according to Marković, we turned to the Russian form of socio-political system.

Mihailo Marković even believes that the system of the communist Yugoslavia was conservative in many, due to the fact that it was elitist, past-oriented, regressive and obstructing its own further revolution. He criticized a vast conglomerate of projects in post-war Yugoslavia, three of them being extremely conservative in character. The best known project subjected to his critique is associated with the failure of implementation of the principles of the: 1965 *Economic reforms* and of the 1984 *Long-term program of economic stabilization*.⁶

In his theoretical work, but also in his public engagement, Mihailo Marković searched for a truly democratic alternative of

6 Essential idea of these project was freeing of economy from politics and free operation of economic laws.

humanistic character to all forms of conservative ideas in our country. In this context, he made a discrepancy between radical long-term vision and direct system reform. For him, the most appropriate solution for our society is long-term – the model of radical democratic socialism.

Radical democracy, according to Marković, is characterized by the following elements (Marković, 1994: 236):

1. Self-governance in the entire public life
2. Direct democracy in microstructure and representative democracy in macrostructure
3. De-professionalization of political leaders
4. Political pluralism
5. Federalism as autonomy of certain parts
6. Respect and practice of all human rights
7. Free exercise of group and individual civil initiatives (provided that it does not pose a risk for other people).

Although society in Yugoslavia was unprepared for this model of democracy at the time, Mihailo Marković believed that critical social theory had reached the level that it was capable to further elaborate radical democracy free from conservative elements that hinder its development. While elaborating this idea further, Marković noted that transformation from conservative to radical, without being mediated by liberalisation, either calls for the use of violence or is unattainable. At this point, he signals the possibility of radical changes by means of the so-called “evolutionary reformism”, but also recommends a series of measures that would eliminate conservative tendencies from the Yugoslavian society. Thus, Marković proposes the making of the free and critically-minded public and the creation of different forms of civil society with an autonomous stance to the political society. In addition, he proposes the elimination of corruption in politics and the creation of atmosphere in which national equality and national minorities’ rights would be exercised.

It is easy to notice that the majority of these ideas are mainly liberal and not radical in character. Marković, indeed, invokes the liberal principles which are inherent in the present civilization in order to rise above the barbaric level. Those are: sovereignty of the people, national self-determination, market unity, civil rights etc.

The problem was that at the time, most of these liberal principles were considered radical.

All these ideas, however progressive and necessary for society, remain utopian, if their realisation is not aided, and so embodied, by the force of resistance. In the context of citizens' resistance, Mihailo Marković quotes the part of a letter written by Thomas Jefferson in 1787, in which he wrote: "What country can preserve its liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserved the spirit of resistance" (Marković 1994: 246).

It was in this very spirit of people's resistance that Mihailo Marković saw the only opportunity for the resolution of the social crisis, elimination of everything that is outdated and conservative, and for the embracement of new progressive ideas.

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