

REFERENCES

ANALYSIS OF LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC APPROACHES AND PRINCIPLES

The "dictatorship" of the economic nature of social life has been the subject of a number of studies conducted by Prof. Dr. Ec. Scs. Dimitar Filipov. Suffice it to mention the monographs "On the Nation", "The Bulgarian Nation", "Culture and Modern Times", "The Media Revolution", "Marx and Modern Times", "The Slav World", to get an idea of the wide scope author's interests.

One of the directions Prof. Filipov focused his efforts on in his last book^{*} is the identification of the economic nature of life in all its aspects and mediations. The euphoria around the monetary form as an expression of the universality of life activities is the social gravity, which corrodes consciousness and the mentality of many theoreticians and politicians. What is more, that moment has eroded into a number of negative processes, manifesting themselves in antihumanism, total commercialism, overestimation of market relations over the ideals and the impulses after beauty in creative work etc. If life is an ocean, the author is, first of all, searching for his own recipe for place and the role of its economic layer, the economic component of the entire life and its contemporary conceptual framework; second, it fills out the information deficit, caused by the insufficient coverage of the creative forces of progress; third, eliminates the underestimation of the economic approaches and principles in the functioning of society and the placing of the creative process in the service of ideologies, policies, etc.

The theoretical product in the analysis of social life in its entirety in the context of economic approaches and principles forms the author's conception of social economy. It is an *original expansion and deepness of political economy's approach in the transformation and development of political economy into a social economy, into an economic theory of life.*

The entire idea of the liberation of economic theory has been put forward in three sections and seventeen chapters.

The first section titled "Methodology" is devoted to the subject and the method of economic theory; to the principal in the social system (civilization model, countries, laws, etc.) and the crisis in modern economic theory as a consequence of changed social circumstances.

The second section "Constructive Forces of Life" contains three chapters, in which the core of the author's idea is presented very successfully: "The Abilities of Man", "The Social Forces" and "The Forces of Nature and Their Absorption".

The third section "Economic Fundamentals of Life" reflects the views of Prof. Filipov on: life and its economic dimensions; social production and its stages as regards the needs, consumption and interests; the relationships of ownership; labour, science and technology. As a summary of the economic in the nature of social life there appear the analyses of public wealth and the forms of its manifestation, the economic and the

^{*} *Dimitar Filipov. Social Economy. Economic Theory of Life. Varna, UPH "Chernorizets Hrabar", 2003, p. 344.*

social in the distribution of relationships, the exchange (including the market) and money.

In the above order the author demonstrates *the triumph of the integrity of life* and the affirmation of the synergism of the entire functioning of the reproductive organism.

Conceptual System

The author's quest is aimed at studying *the subject of economic theory in the light of Man in the context of the universality of his activity*, in a community of negativism from the domination of the economy of capital and the social positivism of the economy of society, of its overall activity asserting life and human well-being. That is the contemporary civilization aspect of creating applied economic knowledge, which serves progress alone and does not substitute political expedience for science. What is more, Prof. Filipov finds that it is high time economic theory turned from a science of industrial production into a science of the economic fundamentals of life (p. 174), into social economy.

Against that background we can summarize the following constituent solutions of the author, aimed towards the search for the formula of a general and uniform theory of the economic aspects of life:

1. The development of Man's abilities has been pointed out as the main force against the background of the social scope of capital relationships, in so far as the latter are conducive to their realization as an aggregate social factor. Furthermore, abilities are analyzed as a "... universal and fundamental goal of the development of economy" (p. 23).

2. The idea of economic reductionism has been unconditionally rejected and the subject of economic science broadened to 4 constituent parts (p. 22): production in all its forms; the forms of activity outside production; the forces and factors, which affect social production and the development of Man; the final results in accordance with the aims of satisfying needs. In this line of thoughts economic signs are universal and peculiar to every type of production, however, there is "mutual penetration and intertwining between activities, without a change in their original character" (p. 32), the transformation of the spiritual sphere from a periphery into a dominant of the economic theory (p. 56).

Against that background the author summarizes the total historical variety and specificity of economic problems into five points (p. 26): the subject, method and civilization and the formational definiteness of society; constructive forces of life; economic fundamentals of life; the capitalist system and the socialist system.

3. The new conceptual understanding of the economic reality has been analyzed through the simultaneous and coordinated functioning of nature, society and the individual in the respective forms of activity and their inherent four social strata: ownership, power, classes and religion. Those are the forces of life, which prof. Filipov has studied in cognitional, historical, present and future aspect. The idea of the overestimation of economic factors of the reproduction of social wealth and the underestimation of its noneconomic forces prevails in the entire study. The author has proved in an indisputable way that the development of the former has reached its limit and the further increase of wealth is the function of science and technologies, education, culture, administration, etc.

What is more, by placing *knowledge, labour and nature* on the throne of *the great forms of history*, Prof. Filipov is looking for the activator of their functioning and finds it in the development of the abilities of Man and society. The latter he identifies as a *major historical law* (p. 87). According to it, the principal social issue is the existence and development of society on the basis of a fair distribution of wealth, which is at the same time the human measurement of progress.

4. The author deduces three Man languages: communication, art and knowledge. He substantiates in succession the need for: scientific literacy of the modern individual (p. 145); sociality in his existence (p. 146); applicability of knowledge (p. 147) and active development of progress on the basis of life activity - education, science, culture and needs (p. 174). In this way the cells of social life are studied in the context of the development of Man and society, as the purpose of life.

From another aspect that is merely a form of manifestation of *social synthesis, of the unity between the material and the spiritual, of the relative detachment of the elements of life activity and their absolutely unity*. The author firmly upholds the thesis of the blurred borderlines between the elements of the social organism, finding its expression in social synthesis (p. 192), in the advent of the economic into the social and cultural spheres (p.211). At the same time the multifunctionality of economic theory has found its substantiated defense in the comprehensive study in two aspects. The first - as the utilization of economic approaches and means in the other spheres of social life, having in mind their genetic nature, the second - as a goal and function of non-economic factors to create the constructive forces of life, of the creative forces of Man and society. In the general context there have been carefully analyzed economic forms of manifestation and in a moderate manner their presence has been determined as adequate to its own nature or as a modifying external influence.

5. The book emphasis on the detailed defence of the thesis of the methodology of scientific knowledge, built on the principles of the universality of life and its activity. The author directs his efforts not towards generating specific knowledge of the approaches of standard analysis, but rather towards the *diversification of its methodological tools*. Thus in the study there have been interpreted the possible approaches for analysis of the modern functioning of life in national and global aspect, the creation of modern forms of wealth not only in their notorious value form, but above all in their spiritual and aesthetic, capability and worth form (p. 284-285). The embedded formula "moderation in interpretations of value appraisals and priority in the quality indicators" is an appeal towards the role of Man and his constructive forces as a precondition and purpose of progress.

6. In the monograph, as a piece of evidence concerning the complexity of the process of reflecting reality, *a wide range of issues have been interpreted* in an interesting and very useful way differentiation of ideological motives from those which are actually scientific impulses and methods of analysis (p. 15); the crisis of modern economic theory and the need for a "new economy" (pp. 57, 110-112); the introduction of a quantitative-qualitative approach and quality indicators in economic theory (p. 60); the nature of the modern transformation of civilization and its inevitable analysis from the positions of economic theory and the entire planetary life activity (p. 68); the relation "material - ideal" and historical practice (p. 79-80); the disequilibrium between natural

and social sciences (p. 97); the new phenomena and processes of this century (p. 100-102); the inclusion of public abilities into the subject of economy (p. 128); the interpretation of nature as a social force (p. 137); the study of the formula of life (p. 184-185); the modern atrophy of consumption (p. 216-218); the model of rational consumption (p. 222); the results of underestimating the needs, the consumption and the interests in economic research (p. 218-220, 227); the broadened interpretation of labour (p. 249); the unity of sciences and their product - knowledge (p. 267); enrichment of the object of social wealth with labour and abilities (p. 284); value as an element of wealth (p. 284-285); exchange as a kind of social metabolism (p. 310), etc.

The Critical Element in and about the Study

The author's claims of creating a study built in the spirit of the "new economy", cannot be complete, unless what has already been done is given a new meaning through critical analysis.

In the analyses made there are solutions which are incomplete, methodologically vicious, one-sided and routine, that sometimes contain practically nonsense, etc. In this line of thoughts the author gives a number of interesting and constructive critical formulations, including some on Marx' legacy: the rejection of microeconomics as an element of the general economic theory (p. 9); the drawbacks of Marx' method of economic cognition - the absolutization of material production, production relations, class relations, the transformation of the economic from means into ends in itself (p. 48-49); K. Marx' teaching of basis and superstructure (p. 64); the restrictedness of the theories of wants (p. 65); the thesis of the correspondence between production relations and factors of production (p. 204); the clearly demonstrated nihilism of the author towards democracy as a theory and realization (p. 239); the precision in measuring the Gross Domestic Product (p. 290), etc.

A number of *critical notes of a more general nature* can be directed towards the book under review: the thesis of the rejection of microeconomics as an element of the general economic theory is vulnerable - in companies and households economic relations are given their portrait ideogram: they are specified, modified, clarified, and thus the general theory does not come down just to universal assertions, but also to practical projections (pp. 16-17, 107); from the entire exposition it follows that the subject of economic theory almost includes the science of Man as well, that market forces are unnecessary, even imposed upon us (p. 22-23), statements which are not weighed precisely; the contents of the subject of economic theory and the objectives and methods requires additional arguments (p. 22-23, 58); the rejected possibility of the emergence of interim (interdisciplinary) sciences through the idea of creating a unified science of Man, society and nature (p. 38) is doubtful. I receive with reservations the statement that modern economic knowledge is dominated by the quantitative approach and I find the arguments concerning the position and the role of quantity and quality in price (p. 59) unconvincing; the analysis concerning comparison between individual forces, abilities, social forces, social energy, the arrow of progress, etc. (p. 133-134) is not sufficiently precise; the flat rejection of entrepreneurship in social production is subject to revision (p. 200), etc.

General Evaluation

The book market offers a comprehensive study of economic reality, in search of the economic formula of life. It uses the Marxist methodological approach, culled from ideological elements and applied over modern social development, in the context of the application of economic approaches and principles towards the entire socio-economic reality. There are considerations of a generally philosophical, generally scientific and specifically scientific nature on economic cognition.

I would sincerely recommend this book to the scientific community, because:

- By rationalizing its ideas everyone who undertakes to study economic theory, may "check his bearings" against the level and the issues of the present-day and retrospective modern thinking.

- The intellectual layer in the work has to do with personal interpretations, critical analysis, affirmation of new points.

- It is an attempt on part of the author to make a multifaceted study of every issue in its sensitivity from the position of the economist, the political scientist, the sociologist, the cultural scientist, the philosopher and the public figure.

- The book is both a grid of the methodology of modern economic cognition and a system of new knowledge about it. Through that study there is the author's systematization and order in getting to know reality, which is the basis of understanding available knowledge and the search for new knowledge.

- The author's laboratory is built from academic analysis and synthesis, global generalizations and retrospective analysis.

- The congruence between fundamental generalizations and the quality of their argumentation finds its expression in the refined culture of Prof. Filipov and especially the literary expression found throughout the manuscript.

- It offers an anatomy, physiology and pathology of life activities - the analysis of the invisible and visible parts of the "iceberg" of truth, the stages of the humiliation of the nation and the individual in the name of the triumph of capital value. What has been done so far in that direction will "come to life again", whereas the wounds of the present will heal quickly only if society is reorganized over a socially fair basis.

For practice the study "Social Economy" is, *first of all*, a recapitulation of the continued research of Prof. Filipov on the unity of the social and the economic systems; *second*, an instigation of additional analyses along the entire spectrum of complex issues of life activities of Man and society in the context of its economic definiteness as well as the reverse - the humanization of the economic sphere; *third*, information enriching educational contents at schools; fourth, the splendid language style of the author, combining the wealth of the Bulgarian literary school with the academism of modern economic cognition, changing radically on encyclopedic basis.

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