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**PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STATE AND CIVIL**  
**SOCIETY: ILLUSION AND REALITY**

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***Abstract***

The state as a social and societal category has existed for many centuries, adding over time new elements to this concept. A civil society is inextricably linked with the concept of “state”, despite the differences between them. The interaction of the state and a civil society has its own laws, transforming the essence of the concepts themselves and generating forms of their interconnection. At the same time, the formation and development of both the state and civil society are inextricably linked with illusion as a philosophical phenomenon, predetermining its various manifestations, including practical illusion, a collectivity surrogate, commodity fetishism. German philosophy has achieved significant results in the study of this phenomenon. Particularly, According to Kant, practical illusion of statehood gives rise to anti-cultural structures and consolidates them in individual consciousness, posing a threat to the social whole. According to Hegel, practical illusion of rights in a state arises when legal norms reflect the desire of any corporation to realize its interests, ignoring principles of natural rights of a human. The founders of the Marxist theory argued that state exists only as an interdependence of individuals, acquiring the form of an “illusory community”, but when the harmony of individual and universal interest is realized, the state will become a new public organization in which “must” and “being” in social life coincide. Many of these ideas are reflected in modern studies and are compatible with the ideas of modern futurologists about development of the state and a civil society.

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**Keywords:** Civil society, collectivity surrogate, commodity fetishism, illusivity, practical illusion, state.



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## 1. Introduction

The problems of illusivity were developed and are being developed by various schools of Eastern and European philosophy. However, rational approaches to this phenomenon were formed only in German classical philosophy, and then developed in Marxist philosophy. Moreover, the attention of scientists was initially attracted by the notions which not everyone knows even now “visibility”, “appearance”, namely “practical illusion”.

The line of research of illusory forms of human activity can be easily traced in the works by Kant and Hegel, who paid much attention to this problem (Kant, 1980; Hegel, 1977). The problem of illusivity interested them only in relation to the political sphere, spiritual communication and its products. Kant, for example, solved it by analyzing the relationship between true religiosity and pseudo-religiousness. At the same time, the results of his research, the conclusions he received may be, in a certain sense, recognized as universal, and extended to other forms of communication and activity.

Hegel was attracted by the consideration of problems of practical illusions, primarily in relation to the state and legal sphere. He showed that the states modern to him in the conditions of universal alienation very often do not correspond to the obligation that is usually attributed to them on the basis of social and historical experience. They radically change their content, hiding from the subject the social meaning of what is happening, “maintaining the state of lawlessness and immorality in a real state” (Hegel, 1977).

Hegel defines state-legal relations as very precise, designed to embody not a primitive rationality, understood from the standpoint of today, but to fulfill the requirements of morality, of real human freedom. Thus, Hegel acts as a creator of theoretical foundations of liberalism. The phenomenon of “practical illusion” in state-legal relations, which was a necessary moment in the development of the political sphere of life, during the transition to commodity production, at the current stage of the social and historical process takes on the characteristics of anti-culture, i.e. destructive structures. Hegel's ideas about the real and the illusory in state-legal relations are becoming practically significant. Especially important are the positions of the Hegelian doctrine about the connection of “practical illusory” in political relations with the anti-cultural elements of social ideology and psychology.

Elements of fanaticism, lack of freedom of the spirit, of course, are inherent in the representatives of all the opposing political forces without exception and continue to feed on the illusory forms of political relations. The analyzed ideas of Hegel could serve as the basis for rational reflection for those political parties and trends that consider themselves to be liberal and democratic.

Marx K. revealed the system of illusory connections inherent in classical bourgeois society, and we can add, to a large extent, they remain and function in modern societies.

## 2. Problem Statement

Kant admitted that some forms of social relations may not correspond to their real essence, purpose, and therefore lead to inadequate results in communication, may deprive human activity of real expediency, erect intellectual and ideological barriers between subjects. Some individuals and entire nations often misunderstand the service of the ideal, the truth, as a service to institutions that act as

carriers or real incarnations of the ideal and the truth. The essence of the products and forms of communication that did not correspond to their duty, Kant expressed the concept of “Wahn” – “illusion.”

The practical illusion of statehood creates and consolidates anti-cultural structures in the minds of the individual, and creates a threat to the whole social. The anticultural structures of mass consciousness can become serious obstacles in the way of progressive social evolutions.

At present, we are able to single out even more obvious signs of a valid right – natural rights of a human, due to the collective creativity of the world community, recorded in documents that are universally recognized.

Thus, the “practical illusion” of a law arises when its norms reflect the desire of any corporation to realize its interests, to realize its own will, ignoring the principles of justice, the natural rights of a human.

There is a need to overcome the “practical illusion” in the political sphere. It is obvious that the solution to this problem will be difficult and ambiguous. It is possible that in the foreseeable future this problem cannot be completely solved.

Illusivity not only permeates the economic relations of bourgeois society, but also becomes their essential characteristic, without a special analysis of which it is impossible to reproduce the mechanism of the functioning of commodity production and social relations and institutions based on it.

One of the ways of existence of an illusory community is the state. The founders of Marxist philosophy emphasized that since private interest prevails in society, it is “the practical struggle of these special interests that have always really opposed common and illusory common interests that makes it necessary to intervene and curb special interests through an illusory “general” interest acting as a state (Marx & Engels, 1986).

Thus, the state -“abstraction” is a real product of the historical era of bourgeois domination. The universality of interest represented by the state is an illusory one, since, firstly, it is the special interest of the “universal estate” of officials, secondly, the special interest of the economically dominant social group represented through the “universal estate”, which triumphed not only in the real class struggle, but also in this “illusory” form of struggle. But the basis of illusivity is not only this. It is associated with the content of relations in civil society, which excludes *generic* nature of individual activities.

A comprehensive study of the phenomenon of illusivity allows, in our opinion, to more fully and more accurately present the socialization process. In particular, it makes it possible to understand that inadequate social orientations of individual in modern society are explained not only by the purposeful influences of bourgeois ideology, but also by illusory nature of real social relations. This allows us to more accurately represent the origins, nature of modern ideology.

### **3. Research Questions**

**3.1. What are the mechanisms for the exclusion of the state from civil society?**

**3.2. Is illusivity, invalidity of real-life associations of people determined by their inconsistency?**

**3.3. Does the state belong to illusory forms of universal interest?**

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the study is to analyze illusory forms of human activity, illusory state structures and their influence on the formation of a real civil society.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The methodological basis of the research is dialectic logic, which gives an idea of general laws of development; a systematic approach associated with the idea of the world-historical process as an emerging integrity, the mechanisms for the formation of an objective illusion.

#### **6. Findings**

Illusory formations are elements of the content of all spheres of human activity, but the mechanism of their emergence and functioning is particularly clearly highlighted in such a phenomenon as an illusory community in the form of “surrogate collectivity” (Marx & Engels, 1986, p.75). It is well known that Marx, in solidarity with progressive bourgeois thinkers, describes the state of capitalist-era civil society relations as “bella omnium contra omnes” – “a war of everybody against everybody”, as the undivided dominance of private interest. On the basis of commodity production under capitalism “in its pure form”, the interdependence of individuals is developed. However, this process is accompanied by the isolation of the individual, his transition “to the position of a loner.” In conditions when various forms of alienation encompass almost all aspects of human activity, illusoriness becomes a necessary moment of basic social ties.

First of all, it becomes an attribute of the structure-forming social communities in which the formation and development of the individual is carried out. The production team torn by the competition of direct producers, the whole, generally participating in the competition, based on the relations of exploitation, is a “surrogate of collectivity” (Marx and Engels, 1986). The same surrogate of collectivism is a bourgeois state, which realizes not the general interest, but the special corporate interests of the bureaucracy and capitalists, and the nation, within which exploiters and exploited, religious communities, and associations on any other basis oppose each other. “The imaginary collectivity, into which individuals have so far united, has always opposed itself to them as something independent; and since it was the unification of one class against another, for the subordinate class it represented not only a completely illusory collectivity, “but also new fetters” (Marx & Engels, 1986, p. 75).

However, the fact is that the illusivity of these social communities does not deny their objectivity. Illusoriness, invalidity of actually existing associations of people is determined by the discrepancy between these associations to their responsibility, which, in this particular case, is freedom, the security of an individual in the society. “In the conditions of real collectivity,” K. Marx notes, “an individual acquires freedom in his association and through it” (Marx & Engels, 1986, p. 75).

One of the obvious facts of illusivity is described in some detail in the literature, and in a number of cases it has even become the subject of special research: it means “commodity fetishism”, “materialization” of social relations. The ultimate causes of commodity fetishism, the situation when

people's relations are represented as relations of things, lie in the rupture of the social basis, the alienation of human activity and the conditions of its existence.

However, one should not limit the analysis of the illusory nature of economic relations to only commodity fetishism. On the basis of the latter, special spheres of vital activity arise, structurally forming bourgeois society.

Pointing to the illusivity of the content of the “purely economic” sphere of life, K. Marx stresses that “... the economic correlation of forms is only a superficial form, a formal definition, the scope of which does not apply to real substance and which in no way refers to this substance as such” (Marx, 1958, p. 218-219).

In the era of commodity production, public interest is realized “only behind the individual interests reflected in themselves, behind the individual interest of one, which is opposite to the interest of the other ... Universal interest is precisely the universality of selfish interests” (Marx, 1958, p. 191).

Consequently, general interest is absent as such and exists in reality only as an interdependence of individuals, between whom labor is divided, acquiring, however, the form of an “illusory community”.

In the civil society of the 19th century, as in modern civil society, differences of origin, class, income, education, profession, property dominate, therefore the individual is deprived of the possibility of actual generic activity and exists as an individual, considering other individuals as a means of achieving their goals.

In order to preserve social integrity, the state, as it were, abolishes these differences, believing a person an equal participant in national sovereignty, depriving him/her of his real individuality and involving him/her in invalid universality. “In a state where a person is recognized as a generic being, he is an imaginary member of imaginary sovereignty, he is deprived here of his real individuality and is filled with void universality” (Marx, 1955, p. 39).

Marx notes that in the political sphere, a human leads heavenly life, unlike earthly life in a civil society. At the same time, in order to serve the illusory general interest, a social group of professional politicians, officials is created, whose activities reinforce the alienation of the political sphere and finally turns the individual into an imaginary member of imaginary sovereignty.

The state is only a special case of the “surrogate of collectivity”, the forms of which are various kinds of communities, production groups, political associations in which the illusory collectivity binds the individual, suppresses it, acts as an alienated form of activity.

Nevertheless, the main structural shift in social relations of the bourgeois type was the alienation of the state from civil society, i.e. making it into a relatively independent organic system, developing and functioning according to its own laws.

The disadvantage of many studies on the genesis of political relations was and remains an incomplete introduction to the scientific circulation of the methodological provisions relating to them, formulated by K. Marx and, partly, F. Engels, who are authorities in this field.

It is primarily about the principles of the approach to the consideration of political relations, developed by K. Marx in his earlier works, for example, “Critique of the Hegelian philosophy of law”, and then developed in the works of the period of maturity of their creativity.

According to the position of Karl Marx, set forth in the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, developed and specified in the German Ideology, and then in subsequent works, there are three major stages in the genesis of political relations: a) political relations of ancient times and the Middle Ages; b) the political relations of bourgeois society; c) the political relations of the beginning of the formation of the post-capitalist formation.

The basis of their comparative analysis are the following methodological approaches. The basic premise, as well as the main direction of the study of political relations, is the consideration of the dialectics of general and private interests in a particular social system. An equally important starting point is the analysis of the relationship between "must" and "being" in social development. Unlike Hegel, Marx proceeded from the fact that the "must" in public life is not determined by properties of the absolute idea, the self-development of which is the "being" that surrounds us, but is objective necessary connections, laws, manifested in reality (Pototsky, 1983).

In accordance with these assumptions, Marx builds a categorical series that serves as a tool for analyzing political relations at each stage of their development: a) a material state; b) a political state; c) a valid state.

The categories "material state" and "political state" are paired, reflecting opposite aspects of the existence of social formations. The "material state" (or "non-political state") refers to the "highlights of national life" outside the general forms of people's interests, in other words, the sphere of domination of private interest, i.e. civil society.

The concept of "political state" refers to the form of implementation of the general interest, opposing the interests of private spheres, developing as something otherworldly in relation to them. However, this is only one of the historical states of political relations, which are the conditions for the development of sociality.

The content of the "real state" category is the aggregate whole existence of people in which state and people's life organically merge, i.e. there is no opposition between universal and private interests, and the real principle of the state is a human. The "real state" is the "must" of any state in general.

At the same time, it follows from the context of this and subsequent works by Marx that the true harmony of general and private interests has never been achieved in history, therefore the function of the "actual state" was still to achieve the conformity of general and private interests, more precisely, the expression of private interests in their most common form.

The "real state" of this kind can be called the existence of medieval estates, as well as state formations of the ancient era. Each social community – an association of feudal lords, a crafts corporation of scientists, and even an enslaved peasant community – had a political character, that is, it itself sought the realization of joint interests, without entrusting it to the special apparatus of specialists – officials.

The organization of the dominant estates of secular feudal lords and feudal clergy, with its complex hierarchy, military character, corporate land ownership, etc., was subordinated to this goal.

Citizens-artisans also had opportunities to implement their joint interests, as a strong organization they opposed feudal expansion, recruiting "military militias" from their line-up, regulating production and life by force. Even the oppressed, exploited peasantry, with an almost complete absence of those opportunities for exercising their common interest, possessed by other estates, nevertheless, had a stable

social organization – the community, and it was within the community that resisted its immediate master and through him to the feudal estate as a whole.

It is noteworthy that modern methodological developments have revealed the fruitfulness of just such a statement of the question of the state. “The state is the sovereign people in the historically given living space, obedient to the machine of institutional sovereign power”, – the conclusion of the author of the textbook of political science Ilyin (Ilyin, Panarin, & Ryabov, 1994, p. 258).

The state at this time, remaining a machine of suppression of the exploited, was not something different from society as a whole. The entire hierarchical, militarily organized class of feudal lords or the system of corporations of privileged citizens acted as the state apparatus. The relation of estates to the empire was, according to Marx, “only a contractual relationship between these different states and a nation, because a political state, unlike a civil society, was nothing but a representation of nations” (Marx, 1955, p. 302).

Since during this period the implementation of the general interests of estates is not mediated by a special apparatus opposing the whole society, political relations of the feudal era can be characterized as direct political relations (Marx and Engels, 1956, p. 544).

The “political state”, embodying the general interest, is opposed to a civil society as an antipode during this period, therefore its content becomes “formal and special”. The historical conditions for the formation of political relations of this type were the development of commodity production, the strengthening of the social power of the third estate, the establishment of a relative balance of power between the feudal estates and the growing bourgeoisie. An absolute monarchy becomes a form of political organization of a society, which is fundamentally different from the political system of the preceding stage in its bureaucratic character, the system of institutions served only by government officials, and the discrepancy of its existence with the life of a civil society.

The absolute monarchy, acting as an arbiter in the conflict between the feudal lords and the growing third estate, was the first form of illusory universal interest. However, it did not succeed in this role to the full extent, since her main stuff consisted of people from nobility, and simply feudal lords, the king of which remained the main one. The most adequate incarnation of the illusory universal interest was the bourgeois state. In it, as already noted, the interest of the bourgeois bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie itself is represented as universal.

It is characteristic that, in the opinion of considered theory of social development founders, from now on every class striving for domination, including the proletariat, supposedly aiming at the destruction of all domination, should, above all, win political power and present its interest as general (Marx & Engels, 1986). Consequently, starting from the new time in the revolution, two main areas are objectively distinguished – the political revolution and the revolution in actual social relations, followed by a complete revolution in the forms of social consciousness.

The alienation of the political sphere of life, which is expressed in the fact that the absolute majority of the population is outside of this generic form of human existence and loses one of the basic social qualities, is natural.

There is no doubt that the state corresponding to the era of “barracks” socialism also belongs to illusory forms of general interest. However, the mechanism of alienation and illusory transformations in

these conditions is somewhat different. Here, from the very beginning, the general interest was associated with the task of preserving the social whole that survived the crisis and was represented by the party-state structures that came to power as a result of the revolution.

The study of the objectified illusion of general interest is of immediate practical importance for understanding the situation in modern societies and in Russian society in particular.

Illusions about the general interests, the purpose of the state, the possibilities of its democratization, its use as a means of achieving the common good, have had and are widely used, have a significant impact on the behavior of the individual in bourgeois society.

The illusions of the social content of economic, political processes that have an objective basis are supported and consolidated by ideology, primarily political. In the process of becoming a person, the most significant for an individual is how social experience is refracted through his “organs of individuality” (the latter include the purely natural inclinations of a person, his or her thinking, desires, and activities). At the same time, K. Marx emphasized that the development of “organs of individuality”, the whole process of socialization of an individual, is determined by the level and nature of the development of the social whole.

There is no doubt that fetishized connections are necessary for this era to participate in the formation of a social whole, along with the real ones. However, with all the significance of the objectified illusion in the development of pre-capitalist societies, its role is immeasurably increasing in bourgeois society. It is during this period of history that the forms of ancestral human activity are distinguished into special spheres of social life. In fact, a developed, mature social structure takes shape in the era of the domination of commodity production.

As it is known, Marx believed that the beginning of the “reverse absorption of state power by society, when the proletarian revolution should put the place of forces subordinating and enslaving society, become its own living forces” (Marx, 1960, p. 548).

In the real social community, when the harmony of individual and universal interest is realized, the state, having reached the highest form of its existence, becomes a “real state” in a developed form. A new social organization should be a coincidence of “must” and “being” in social life. This is, in general, the views of Karl Marx on the fate of statehood.

If we exclude a rather controversial idea of “proletarian revolution” and replace the concepts of “socialism”, “communism” with the concepts “post-capitalism”, “post-industrial society”, “third wave”, Marx’s concept of state evolution, relying on solid historical material, will look quite fruitful and quite compatible with the ideas of modern futurologists about the development of public self-government.

Bureaucracy, i.e. the substitution of real universal interest with illusory ones remains a necessary moment of the political system of modern societies of all types, including those which we now call democratic. “The more I studied the problem,” noted in this connection, famous American economist J. Galbraith, along with all other problems, who studied the evolution of bureaucracy in the era of scientific and technological revolutions and the domination of large corporations, especially, in recent years, clearly distinguished negative trends in the development of bureaucratic and technocratic structures” (Galbraith, 1989, p. 115). Technocracy, which forms the basis for its imperative of economic and technological



efficiency and at the same time ignoring the human principle in social processes, can also be considered as a form of practical illusion.

In conditions when political activity is carried out, mainly, by professionals who have a particular interest, with poor development of control from below, which is also difficult due to the monopoly of the state apparatus for information, the ability to manipulate public opinion, signs of competence, etc., public administration is inevitable, it acquires a self-sufficient character and turns into an autonomous, alienated system, generating in large numbers the varieties of the phenomenon of illusoriness.

However, the task of putting in place the illusory management structures of the living forces of a civil society cannot be solved in the present state of Russia and even in the present state of developed countries. The conditions necessary for this are only born. Some trends in this regard are outlined in the structure of the emerging post-industrial society (Saglie & Sivesind, 2018).

The well-known American scientist E. Toffler defined these trends in aggregate as the “third wave”, the implementation mechanisms of which are de-marshalling, decentralization, de-standardization, de-bureaucratization, new information system (Toffler, 2002). The process of the post-industrial society formation is very contradictory, therefore the prospect of overcoming the phenomenon of objectivized illusion in it requires special study.

## 7. Conclusion

Summarizing the above, we note that the state has passed a significant evolutionary path, and its inherent aspects of practical illusion correlate with modern forms of social relations. The formation and development of a civil society, as well as illusions about the general interests and purpose of the state, possibilities of its use, as a means of achieving the common good, are less realistic in accordance with the current state of the social environment where citizens live in public. German philosophy identified landmarks that have become more widespread and have had a significant impact on the behavior of individuals in the state, their activity in a model of culture formation, religion and the preservation of traditional political and psychological phenomena of behavior and consciousness.

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