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Personality in history: modern approaches

The article examines the problem of the role of the individual in history that always remains relevant for each generation. The authors cite the factors and reasons that determine the degree of influence of historical figures on society, make an analysis of modern views on the role of the individual in history. The work of Sydney Hook «Hero in History. Investigation of limits and possibilities» (synergistic studies) is considered. The so-called counterfactual (or alternative) history that explores the hypothetical alternatives under non-existent scenarios is developing quite actively, especially in recent decades. An analysis of the state of the problem of the role of the individual in history shows that it is far from its final decision, that this level of its research is absolutely insufficient and needs to be deepened and systematized, as well as in need of new ideas. The article also examines the role of individual actors in the process of the formation of states and their evolution. The authors conclude that a person put forward at the level of the head of state is responsible for the life and development of this society. But not everything depends on the head. The society that elected him also plays a huge role in the development of the state.

Keywords: personality, history, historical, role of personality, role in history, hero, individual.

Historical events are not predetermined, so the future has many alternatives. At the same time, the future can change as the result of the activities of not only major political forces, but even individual groups and their leaders, it also depends on the actions of various people, such as scientists [1]. Therefore, the problem of the role of the individual in history for each generation always remains relevant. K. Kautsky rightly noted that «least of all, we can ignore the role of individuals in the struggle of modernity» [2; 690]. The urgency of the problem of the role of the individual in our modern period — the period of globalization, when the general principles and mechanisms of life for all of humanity as a truly unified system are laid - also appears in a new aspect of significance [3].

There is no doubt that: a) there are many factors and reasons that determine the degree of influence of historical figures on the society; b) this influence can vary greatly depending on the circumstances. At the beginning of the twentieth century it began to be understood more deeply. The growth of the revolutionary movement, the First World War and the subsequent revolutions and dictatorships created the basis for the rise of social philosophy and social sciences in general. Problems of the laws of history and chance, as well as the personality in various aspects were also among the topical ones. The rise of psychology and genetics also contributed to the growth of interest in the problem of the role of personality. The appearance of new figures who managed to change the world especially stimulated the interest. Such persons as Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler, who turned all the usual ideas about the state, society, violence and opportunities of a historical figure, demanded a new look at the problem of the role of personality. That is why the greatest successes in developing the theory of the role of the individual were achieved not in Marxism, the representatives of which continued to explore these problems (for example: Trotsky, Kautsky, Gramsci), as the dogma of iron laws of history dominated it, but among those who were concerned about the future democracy. First of all, it is worth highlighting the work of Sydney Hook «The Hero in History. The Study of Limits and Opportunities», which was a significant step forward in the development of the problem and is still the most serious work on the subject under the study. On the whole, Hook is quite convincing and in some places very figuratively substantiated a number of important provisions that made it possible to substantially avoid the extremes of the Plekhanov antinomy. Plekhanov wrote that the clash of views on the question of the role of the personality often assumed the form of «antinomy, the first member of which was general laws, and the second was the activity of individuals. From the point of view of the second member of the antinomy, history seemed to be a simple link of accidents; from the point of view of its first member, it seemed that even individual features of historical events were caused by the action of general causes» [4; 331]. In the framework of the task set by the book subtitle, Hook examines the power of influence of great people and some restraining it factors.

In the work of Hook, there are many advantages, but it would have greatly benefited if the author in any place of the book (introduction or conclusion) briefly, but in the system presented his own ideas. This would be all the more valuable because his concept has the gaps. Some sections of the Hook's book are excessively verbose, but not sufficiently theoretical, the author formulates other provisions fragmentary, often limited to only passing comments or hints. So, the problem of the hero and democracy is analyzed very carefully, at the same time, a number of important topics are not enough, others are only mentioned or not touched at all [3; 3-41].

Unfortunately, after World War II, the interest in the problem of the role of the individual has decreased. It remains insufficient today, despite the special importance in the context of globalization of the actions of individuals and forces (groups) they lead. Naturally, the point was not that the very role of the individual had decreased. In the whole, the situation in the world was and it is still the opposite today. The destinies (rises and tragedies) of many countries were closely connected with one person or another. Even international terrorism is unthinkable without outstanding leaders. In the center of the World System, where democracy is not conducive to the emergence of outstanding people, and the social system with its separation of powers, checks and balances, may have reached the maximum in the possibilities of ensuring stability and security, indeed, the role of the individual was less pronounced, the fact that could influence the decline in interest in this problem [5].

The reasons for the decrease in interest in the problem of the role of the individual is also the fact that in recent decades as a whole, the questions of philosophy and theory of history have become less popular. And at the same time traditional philosophical problems cease to be in demand. At the same time, interest in long-term trends and processes in which the role of the individual seems to be lost has grown.

However, since social science traditionally lags behind the reality, it is likely that in the coming decades, as the globalization increases and the need to develop common solutions, the problem of the role of the individual will again become relevant.

After the publication of Hook's book, the study of the problem of the role of the individual in history, of course, did not stop, but the work was mainly in line with the already existing theories with the involvement of new scientific methods and data. Traditionally, more attention was given to this problem by the Marxist authors or some of its active opponents, who are trying to create alternative theories based on it. On the other hand, the criticism of determinism sounded very often sometimes it was very witty and deep. In general, like some other traditional problems, the problem of the role of the individual was considered in the framework of some other problems; at best, only a separate paragraph was given to it [5].

Among the authors who actively investigated the problems of the laws of history, such philosophers as Dray, Hempel, Mandelbaum, Nagel, K. Popper, Stern, Walsh should be noted. In the course of these studies, they also dealt with the question of the role of the individual in history to some extent (on the whole rather fluently and fragmentary), but the range of the discussion did not go beyond determinism and anti-determinism.

In the twentieth century it became finally clear that the society can be in different qualitative states, on which many of its characteristics depend. Some interesting remarks on the differences in the power of personal influence in different stability states of societies (stable and critically unstable) can be found in the works of A. Labrioli [6; 182, 183], J. Nehru [7; 71], A. Ya. Gurevich [8; 68] and others. Although S. Hook did not associate the change in the power of an individual's influence on the society with the state of the latter, nevertheless, considered the availability of alternatives as an essential condition, which often - but not always - corresponds to the unstable state of the society.

The role of prominent people in the process of the formation of states, the creation of religions and civilizations is well known in culture, science, inventions, etc. In this connection, it is worth pointing out the theory of the creative minority by A.J. Toynbee [9]. It can also be said that some interesting ideas about the role of individuals in the process of formation of chiefdoms and states sometimes appear in the works of some neo-evolutionists, (Claessen; Carneiro; Miller) [5].

The question of the role of individual personalities in the process of states formation and their evolution is extremely interesting and important, it perfectly illustrates the importance of developing a theory of the role of individuals. At the same time, it is worth noting that at the origin of the formation of almost any early state or large political entity such as an analogue of an early state there is always one or another prominent person [10].

In the 50s-60s of the twentieth century a systematic approach that potentially opened up the possibility of a new look at the role of the individual was finally formed. But more important were synergistic studies.

Although synergists paid little attention to the problem of the role of the individual, nevertheless, due to the fact that the synergetics significantly developed and deepened the understanding of the behavior of systems in some respects, it also potentially opened up some opportunities to deepen the understanding of the role of the individual

Synergetics distinguishes two main states of the system (including society): order and chaos. The society does not allow a significant transformation in the state of order; if it develops, it happens in a certain direction, in the terminology of N. N. Moiseyev it is called «evolutionary channel» [11]. Despite the negative associations, the chaos often means the possibility for the system to move to another state, which can mean both higher and lower levels. Since the system or the society is in a very unstable situation, when its main ties or institutes that have been consolidated before are weakened or destroyed, a special state of bifurcation (divarication) arises. At the point of the bifurcation (revolution, war, restructuring, etc.) the society can turn in one direction or another under the influence of very minor reasons in general. And it is important that the direction and level of the transition largely depend on what personalities are at the head of the movement [3].

The so-called counterfactual (or alternative) history is developing quite actively, especially in recent decades. It explores the hypothetical alternatives under non-existent scenarios, for example, under what conditions Germany and Hitler could win the World War II, [12] what would happen if Churchill died in 1931 [13], Napoleon won the battle of Waterloo [14; 73], etc. Thus, in the center of this line of research is often the figure of some major historical figure and the following question important for our research is under discussion: what would have happened if there had not been a certain personality (or, on the contrary, if this personality continued to live). Although at first glance such studies seem unsuitable for historians, nevertheless, they allow to play many different alternative scenarios, from which, firstly, it becomes obvious that historical events are not predetermined, and secondly, the reasons why or another trend (personified by one or another leader) won. It also provides an opportunity for large-scale generalizations [3].

The first works in this field were made in the 19th century, such as, for example, the book by Geoffroy-Chateau [15], where the focus is on the hypothesis of what could have happened if Napoleon went to conquer the world instead of Russia. Sydney Hook attached great importance to the study of such potential alternatives, which, in his opinion, have a deep meaning. He even devoted an entire chapter to this, called «If» in history [16]. In this chapter he discusses a number of such «ifs», in particular, he wonders if the Great Depression could have been prevented if Hoover had been elected the President in 1928 instead of Roosevelt (and he concluded that it couldn't). It is worth mentioning two works on such topics by A. Toynbee: «If Alexander had not died then ...», «If Philip and Artaxerxes had survived ...» [17]. An interesting article on this topic was also written by Thompson [18].

The analysis of the state of the problem of the role of the individual in history shows that it is far from its final decision, that this level of its research is absolutely insufficient and needs to be deepened and systematized, as well as new ideas.

1. By the time of the impact: at the time of the action or later, but during the life of the personality; after the death or even many years after it.

2. Close to the point «1» - direct and indirect. So, with respect to the October Revolution, Lenin plays a direct, and Marx - mediated role.

3. By the very fact of the absence or presence of a person. For example, the absence of the heir to the Russian Tsar Fedor Ivanovich (1584–1598) led to the termination of the dynasty of the Moscow tsars, the election of Boris Godunov as the king, the appearance of the impostor False Dmitry I in 1604 and the Time of Troubles; and, on the contrary, the mere fact of the existence of Tsar Mikhail Romanov elected by the people in 1613, although he was inactive at first, had already greatly changed the political situation.

4. Close to the point «3» - active or passive. For example, imprisoned at the end of the XIX century (in 1894) in France on charges of espionage, Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfuss played a passive role himself, but the Dreyfus case turned into the largest political scandal that split France in the 1890s and nearly caused a split of the country in the early 1900s.

5. Planned - unplanned. This is important, since many of the influences were not planned by anyone and were not even supposed, but often they were the most significant.

6. By the presence or absence of choice. Sometimes the main thing is to do something, because it is clear to everyone what to do, but there is no necessary figure. So, the Russians in 1610–1611 knew that they needed to drive the Poles out of Moscow, but only Kozma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky could do it. This is the role of Joan of Arc. In other situations, the main thing is to determine the path of development.

7. By the nature of activity, since what is favorable for some spheres of life is not conducive for the others.

8. By progressive - reactionary. All other things being equal, it can still be said that it is easier to play a negative role than a positive one, and often in order to prevent, bring to a crisis, etc., no abilities are needed, whereas they are almost always necessary to create something new. Thus, the notion of an outstanding personality was more often applied to the individuals playing a negative role, but there were many people among them who, using the term of Hook, can be attributed to the people influencing the events.

9. According to the degree of innovation.

10. By the ability to replace the persons. Such personalities as Caesar or Napoleon were irreplaceable, but, for example, can the Prussian field marshal von Blucher, the winner of Napoleon, fall into this category?

11. Performed individually, within the organization, of the state.

12. Others.

There is no doubt that not all types of «roles» are listed here. In addition, the real figure can play not one role, but several at once. Doing the analysis for each type or the combination, it is desirable to determine their characteristics, favorable or unfavorable moments during [3; 3-41].

Due to this list it is clear that the level of intelligence, talents and personal, including moral, qualities of historical figures has a huge amplitude, that is, it should not be - that was typical for the writers of the old time - only about the brilliant or very talented people.

The approach of L.E. Grinin regarding who should be considered a «historical person», in its most generalized form, can be characterized as it follows: due to its personal characteristics, or occasion, or social position, or the specifics of time, any person can make, by the fact of the existence, ideas, actions or inaction directly or indirectly, during the life or in the aftermath of death, such effects on one's own or others's societies that can be considered important because they left a noticeable mark on history and influenced the course of the further development of the societies (in a positive, negative or unequivocally not definable way) [3; 19].

About distinguishing outstanding and ordinary personalities. In response to the sharp opposition of creative personality and inertial mass, sociologists and philosophers of the late XIX - first half of the twentieth centuries, for example, Mikhailovsky, Kareev, Kautsky, and others, made a turn in the other direction. According to their views, the boundaries by which outstanding personalities and masses can be separated were found to be completely blurred. In particular, it has become fashionable, especially among the Marxists, to assert that all individuals, not just individual prominent personalities, make history [5; 696]. But with some limited justice for such an approach as a whole, it does not, within the framework of the problem under consideration, take into account fundamental differences in the degree and strength of the influence on the events of different people. Yes, formally history is made by all individuals. But does it make sense to talk about the prominent personalities, if we equate them to the most ordinary? As a rule, the role of an ordinary person is not just small. The influence is either extinguished by other influences, or is included in the general force (to a large extent besides or against the will). And if the act has become important in any way, then this person is no longer an ordinary person. Thus, there is a certain critical point of the impact of the individual on the society, beyond which only this influence becomes noticeable. But, of course, the method of determining this point is difficult, as in any dialectical process [3; 3-41].

Some factors that change the scale of the influence of historical figures:

1) In situations where there can be only one single person (for example, a monarch, heir, commander-in-chief), or where this person defines the canons (the creator or reformer of orthodox religion, like Mohammed, Luther, Calvin), the role of this person is much higher than in the situations where alternatives are allowed (in science, culture, invention, etc.), and even if many people are involved in any activity. So, in business there are always outstanding people. But few of them can be said that his role in the national and especially the world plan is such that without this person the development of the economy would have gone a completely different way, that anyway, even worse or later, he would not be replaced by other businessmen.

2) The democratic system compared with the monarchist, on the one hand, makes it possible to express themselves to a much larger number of people, on the other hand, it reduces the dependence of development on the personality («benefactor») and protects from excessively harmful influence. However, great reformers in democracies will occur less frequently than in monarchies [16].

3) There are situations when there is a shortage of personalities and the arrival of a person on time is equivalent to an extreme increase in tendency. But it can be the other way around — there is competition,

and although someone can do better or faster, in general, this is not so important, because the difference in time and quality will not be too big.

The general conclusion is: the fewer alternatives and real opportunities the society has to choose or replace an individual (less real competition for a leader's place) and the more responsible the position of a given individual in the public hierarchy, the more important the role and the more this society depends on its personal data under the critical circumstances [3; 3-41].

N.K. Mikhailovsky and K. Kautsky correctly captured the social effect: the power of the personality increases in colossal proportions when there is a mass behind, and even more so when this mass is organized and cohesive. In this case, according to the Plekhanov's fair remark, the personality as if assigns a part of the forces of the others to itself. But the dialectic of the relationship between the individual and the masses is still much more complicated, and here we see a wide variety of situations: from the one when the masses represent an inert population, with which the authorities can do whatever they want to the head acting only as an expression of the moods of the layer (masses) and cannot step without their desire (such was, for example, the dependence of the king on the nobility in Poland in the 18th century) [5].

It is possible, in particular, to note the situation of historical leaderism, when a leader calls on everyone, anyone, to rise under his banner. He does not care who it will be, there are no restrictions, so long as there are more adherents. Those are the preachers, ambitious politicians, rebels, etc. Such rebels often appear in difficult times for the country (including in electoral democracies), trying to unite all the discontented.

The possibility of a sharp increase in the strength of a movement in conditions of the crisis and discontent depends not only on the objective conditions, but in direct proportion is connected with the ability of the leaders to take the right steps, to adequately understand the situation, to master it. Then it happens that in many ways it depends on the feature characteristics of the leader where this common force will turn to. It also happens when the masses are confused or inert.

In situations of sustainability in the society, the dynasty, the state apparatus, the elites and parties usually have a substitute for leaders when they die, discrediting themselves, or the time of election comes. This is typical of the monarchy with the correct transfer of power («The King is Dead, Long Live the King!») and for a developed democracy as well- in a word, for an established regime.

Comparing the role of the masses and personalities, one can see the following: on the side of the former there is a size, scale, emotions, and the absence of personal responsibility. On the side of the second there is an awareness, goal, will, plan. Therefore, it can be said that, other things being equal, the role of the individual will be the greatest when the advantages of both the masses and the leaders are united in one force. That is why splitting in this way reduces the power of organizations and movements, and the presence of rival leaders can generally reduce it to zero [5].

So, there is no doubt that the significance of the personality is determined by many factors and causes. And at the beginning of the twentieth century it began to be understood more deeply. But the problem of the role of personality in each historical epoch appeared in the new splendor of its complexity. The emergence of new figures who managed to shake the world, each time demanded the philosophers to reconsider their positions. The pleiad of the French revolutionaries, forcing some people to worship them, and the others to curse, and then the figure of Napoleon, who left no contemporaries or descendants indifferent, marked the beginning of the modern theories of the role of personality. The emergence of such historical figures who have realized the long-standing needs of nations in a single state like O. Bismarck in Germany, J. Garibaldi and King Victor Emmanuel II (1820–1878) in Italy forced to think about the conformity of the individual and the moment. The struggle of lonely revolutionaries spawned the theories of the analysis of «heroes and the crowd». Finally, the figures of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler, who made the world tremble and be horrified, demanded a new look at the problem of the role of personality.

The ambiguity and diversity of the problem of the role of the individual in history requires an adequate, multilateral approach to its solution, taking into account the greatest possible number of the reasons that determine the place and role of the individual in a particular moment of historical development. The combination of these reasons is called the factor of the situation, the analysis of which allows not only to unite different points of view, localizing them and cutting their claims, but also facilitates methodically the study of a specific case, without predetermining the result of the study.

The historical person is able to speed up or postpone the solution of the urgent problems, give the solution special features, use the possibilities provided talently or foolishly. If a certain person managed to do something, it means that there were already potential opportunities for this in the depths of the society. No individuals are able to create the great epochs if there is no accumulated conditions in the society. More-

over, the presence of a social task that is more or less relevant to the individual is something predetermined, rather random, although quite probable.

In conclusion, it can be said that, in any form of government, this or that person is promoted to the level of the head of the state, who is called upon to play an extremely responsible role in the life and development of a given society. A lot depends on the head of the state, but, of course, not everything. Much depends on the society that elected him, as well as on what forces carried him out to the level of the head of the state. The people are not a homogeneous and equally educated force, and the fate of the country may depend on what groups of the population turned out to be in the majority in the elections, with what measure of understanding they exercised their civic duty. One can only say: what is the people, such is the person that they have chosen.

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Тарихтағы тұлға: заманауи тәсілдер

Мақалада әр ұрпақ үшін өзекті болып табылатын тарихтағы тұлғаның рөлі зерттелген. Авторлар тарихи тұлғалардың қоғамға әсер ету дәрежесін анықтайтын факторлар мен себептерді келтіріп, тарихтағы адамның рөлі туралы заманауи көзқарастарды талдайды. Сидни Хуктың «Тарихтағы батыр. Шектеулер мен мүмкіндіктерді зерттеу» (синергетикалық зерттеулер) жұмысы қарастырылған. Айтарлықтай белсенді, әсіресе соңғы онжылдықта ойдан шығарылған сценарий бойынша болжамдық баламаларды зерттейтін контрфактуалды (немесе балама) тарих дамып келеді. Тарихтағы адамның рөлі туралы мәселенің жағдайын талдау оның түпкілікті шешімінен алыс, қазіргі оның зерттеу деңгейінің жеткіліксіз және оны тереңдету және жүйелендіру, сондай-ақ жаңа идеялар қажет екендігін көрсетті. Мақалада сонымен қатар мемлекеттердің қалыптасу және даму үдерісіндегі жеке қайраткерлердің рөлі қарастырылған. Авторлар мемлекет басшысының деңгейінде ұсынылған тұлғаға осы қоғамның өмірі мен дамуы үшін үлкен жауапкершілік жүктелген деп қорытындылайды. Алайда

бәрі де тек қана басшыға байланысты болмайды. Оны сайлаған қоғамда мемлекеттің дамуында маңызды орынды иеленуде.

Кілт сөздер: тұлға, тарих, тарихи, тұлғаның рөлі, тарихтағы рөлі, батыр, индивидуум, қоғам.

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Личность в истории: современные подходы

В статье исследована проблема роли личности в истории, которая всегда остается актуальной для каждого поколения. Авторы приводят факторы и причины, которые определяют степень влияния исторических деятелей на общество, делают анализ современных взглядов на роль личности в истории. Рассмотрена работа Сидни Хука «Герой в истории. Исследование пределов и возможностей» (синергетические исследования). Достаточно активно, особенно в последние десятилетия, развивается так называемая контрфактуальная (или альтернативная) история, которая исследует гипотетические альтернативы при несуществующих сценариях. Анализ состояния проблемы роли личности в истории показывает, что она далека от своего окончательного решения, что данный уровень ее исследования абсолютно недостаточен и нуждается в углублении и систематизации, а также в новых идеях. В статье также исследуется вопрос о роли отдельных деятелей в процессе образования государств и их эволюции. Авторы делают вывод, что на уровень главы государства выдвигается личность, на которую возлагается большая ответственность за жизнь и развитие данного общества. Но не все зависит только от руководителя. Общество, избравшее его, также играет огромную роль в развитии государства.

Ключевые слова: личность, история, исторический, роль личности, роль в истории, личность, герой, индивидуум.

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