

THE MILITARY AS THE IDEAL CITIZEN IN THE SOCIAL CONCEPTION OF K.N. LEONTYEV

G.M. Drobzheva¹, A.V. Repnikov²

*Department of History and Philosophy, TSTU (1);
Russian Academy of Theater Art, Moscow (2)*

*Represented by professor A.A. Slezin
and a Member of the Editorial Board Professor V.I. Kononov*

Key words and phrases: aesthetic philosophy of life; conservative views; heroes; ideal of man and citizen; “law of fulfilled life”; multifaceted individuality; social ideal of “flourishing” state; universal men;

Abstract: The “aesthetic instinct” predominated the scientific creativity and conservative views of K.N. Leontyev. According to the theoretical principle of “fulfilled life” he constructed the social ideal of “flourishing” state. In that social organism only the military must be considered as ideal citizen because of their multifaceted individual and “two grate skills”: to govern and to obey.

K.N. Leontyev (1831-1891) is known as a classic representative of the conservative orientation of Russian political thought. It doesn't mean that his conservative views were identical with the reactionary ideology. The measures Leontyev proposed to Russian government to realize may be called as “progressive-reactionary” reforms. In his theoretic vision of the historic process there's the original synthesis of the “progressism” and the “spirit of the social safeguarding”. The last one can be called the most important principle in Leontyev's historiosophic conception.

The uniqueness of Leontyev's perception of reality determined the essence of his historiosophical, social and political views. We mean the “aesthetical instinct”, which predominated all manifestations of his private life, artistic and scientific creativity. All his life Leontyev protected the Beauty as hard as he could. In any case his strong conviction of the greatest value of aesthetic prompted him to hold conservative political views and construct social ideal of “flourishing” state. He was sure that for the social researcher the important thing is to consider the life in its entirety and completeness.

Leontyev was very consistent in his conclusions. He made his social and political ideas conditional on his aesthetic philosophy of life. Such phenomena as Variety, Distinctiveness, Unity, Power, Suppression, Force, Creativity, Poetry, Order and Inequality had the aesthetic character in his vision. According to the system of the conservative values main aesthetic values he advocated acquire the specific social meaningfulness. In the social context they transformed into demands for personal, social and provincial distinctiveness, “instinct of social safeguarding”, which must be maintained by the strong Monarch power and cultivated by the Orthodox Church, horizontal and vertical inequality and respectful attention to national cultural traditions.

He placed the society under the “law of fulfilled life” in his theoretical conception. It meant that social life must be proper, full-blooded and fruitful. Leontyev maintained the necessity of social fight inside the state, but added that it must be held back by strong despotic power. The “normal” life condition of the “flourishing” state is to be

“periodically” in war with another country, - Leontyev said. Punishing and protecting forces, that keep the society from annulling, he considered as most important components of social structure. He was sure that for the state’s good the military and priests must predominate over the rhetors and sophists. The first ones give form to the state, the second – aptitude for destruction of the state organism.

Leontyev extolled the ancient blissful times, when the military, but not the country teachers and intelligent employees, were the man’s ideal. He admired the beauty of “stormy” epochs, the poetry of struggle, risk and even bloodshed in the history of mankind. Leontyev contrasted those heroic epochs with XIX-th century European civilization, which, in his mind, vegetated fruitlessly in comfort and safety. He regarded peaceful, well-regulated life, filled up only by brainwork and compromises, but devoided of danger, large-scale breakdowns, cruel and bloodshed suppressions as “vegetation”.

It’s clear, that heroes were needed for heroic epoch. In what social group could Leontyev find them? In his mind, only the military were fit to govern and secure the political stability. They win universal confidence by their moral qualities and political and professional qualification. Leontyev tried to form a notion of the military as universal men. He wrote, that they could show themselves in their best in any profession, any status. “Men of arms” are more universal and natural, than “men of quill”. In the company of “men of quill” he saw minimum of vital, spontaneous poetry.

Leontyev was fond of military because of their capability to adapt themselves to any social realities. In the “flourishing” state only the military can show the best adjustment to the constant sequences of war and peaceful periods. He was convinced of multifaceted individual of military, which made them the opportunity to reveal themselves in different situations and to be claimed in any historic epoch. Their skill may be useful not only in the military sphere of activity. The officers may successfully try themselves at many trades: as diplomats, administrators, ministers, landowners, judges, painters, and scientists.

The universality of the military, on Leontyev’s opinion, was the most valuable civil quality. He considered the brave and gifted, noble and rich military with their faithfulness to the civil duty as the ideal of man and citizen. He emphasized, that the military service helped the man to develop “two great skills”: to govern and obey. The military, which can be imperative and may force others, was rather valuable than the representatives of other social groups. “Only the poet and the monk may become the equal of the military”.

In addition to this statement Leontyev said, that in hard and dangerous moments of historic life the society hold out it’s hands not to orators and journalists, but men, who can govern and impress. He didn’t agree to liberals of the XIX century, who thought about the military with some prejudice. They often accused the military of their reactionary social role and ridiculed their harsh discipline and order.

The conservative philosophy of life is traditional. Its important characteristic is the sacral perception of state symbols and institutes. Russian conservatives of the XIX-th and the beginning of the XX-th centuries regarded the army not only as the military organization or one of supports of the Monarch regime. They associated the army’s destiny with the destiny, independence and might of Russia. The conservative didn’t comprehend the army as soulless mechanism. The military service was equated by them with religious serving, spiritual and physical exploit.

His attitude to the war and military was romantic. The main factor of forming such perception was his own experience of participation in Crimean war. He ran away from Moscow and peaceful “unnatural” life to experience risk, danger and full-blooded military existence. Leontyev considered, that the military live in reality, but the intelligentsia feed on myths and abstract schemes.

Leontyev reminds, that when the state has a hard time, when the necessity to defend the fatherland in fact, but not by words, arises, the society doesn’t turn to the lawyers and teachers, with their dreams about panslavian waffle. In that periods Russia

hurriedly trusted her destiny to brave military leaders, who got into habit in fighting against the death. The military don't get embarrassed of empty "progressive" phrases and apply the bridle of lifesaving impression on the rebellious citizens.

The social structure of his ideal society consisted of three main groups: nobility, peasants and workers. The military and intelligentsia must be considered as the part of the ruling noble class. He hated the merchants, but recognized that they were necessary in the society as the digestion in the organism. He loved the peasants for their skill to obey and keep the individuality of national culture.

The state power doesn't lie only in military might and strong order. Leontyev saw its main aim in the creation of national culture. The clergy, the poets and the peasants were very valuable members of society, but parochial. They can't joint "great gifts": to govern, to obey, and to create. The military was only social group Leontyev considered the ideal citizen of his ideal state.

Военные как идеальные граждане в социальной концепции К.Н. Леонтьева

Г.М. Дробжева¹, А.В. Репников²

*Кафедра истории и философии ТГТУ (1);
Российская академия театрального искусства, Москва (2)*

Ключевые слова и фразы: «закон полноты жизни»; идеал человека и гражданина; консервативные взгляды; многосторонняя индивидуальность; социальный идеал «цветущего государства»; универсальный человек; эстетическая философия жизни.

Аннотация: Характер научного творчества К.Н. Леонтьева и его консервативные взгляды были обусловлены его «эстетическим инстинктом». В соответствии с теоретическим требованием «полноты жизни» он сформулировал социальный идеал «цветущего государства». В этом социальном организме только военные могут считаться идеальными гражданами благодаря их многосторонней индивидуальности и «двум великим умениям»: повелевать и подчиняться.

Militär als ideale Bürger in der Sozialkonzeption von K.N.Leontjew

Zusammenfassung: Charakter des wissenschaftlichen Schaffens von K.N.Leontjew und seine konservativen Meinungen waren mit seinem "ästhetischen Instinkt" bedingt. Gemäß den theoretischen Forderungen "der Lebensfülle" hat er das soziale Ideal des blühenden Staates formuliert. In diesem sozialen Organismus dürfen nur die Militärs als ideale Bürger dank ihrer vielfächigen Individualität und "zwei großen Fähigkeiten" – befehlen und sich unterwerfen – gelten.

Militaires comme citoyens idéaux dans la conception de K.N. Léontiev

Résumé: Le caractère de l'oeuvre scientifique de K.N. Léontiev et ses opinions conservatrices s'expliquent par son «instinct esthétique». Conformément aux exigences théoriques de la «plénitude de la vie» il a formulé l'idéal social de «l'état de prospérité». Dans cet organisme social ce ne sont que les militaires qui passent pour les citoyens idéaux grâce à leur individualité multilatérale ainsi que grâce à deux grandes qualités: commander et se soumettre.