

## THE ISSUES OF METHODOLOGY OF SCIENCE IN THE RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY OF THE 19TH–20TH CENTURIES

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, an attempt is made to fill a large gap in social and philosophical studies and break developed stereotypes about unrealistic and limited views of Russian Narodnik philosophers. Besides, it contributes to the overcoming of an obsolete view on the heritage of the Russian philosophical and sociological thought. The thoughts of the Russian scientist N.I. Kareev are of a certain interest in revealing this topic. In his works, he held numerous interdisciplinary discussions with Russian and Western philosophers. The crucial issues in the system of Kareev's social and philosophic conception are these of methodology of science, including the role of philosophy of history in the system of historic knowledge and subjective synthesis as an essential component of scientific cognition. Kareev treated methodological synthesis of sciences as a necessary process for the scientific cognition of history. This synthesis manifested itself in creating classification of sciences and establishing the system of historical knowledge. Kareev attributes a special role to the philosophy of history in methodological synthesis, which distinguishes his discourse from the discourse of Western philosophers.

**Keywords:** historica, historiosophy, methodology of science, philosophy of history, theory of historical process, Nikolay I. Kareev, August Komte.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The entire system of scientific knowledge always supported interest in identifying the peculiarities of historical knowledge with a view to reveal the problem of development of the society and personality. Various issues can be relevant within this problem. Philosophical approach involves various decisions, which, in turn, depend on a philosophic mentality. In this sense, the approach of Russian philosophers can compete with West European philosophic solutions.

In this regard, the views of Nikolay I. Kareev (1850–1931), a historian, sociologist and philosopher, who devoted almost half a century to studying the key problems of interaction between sciences and developing interdisciplinary methodology, are of particular interest.

The fate of Kareev's theoretical heritage in Russia was rather difficult as his views were criticized by key representatives of materialism. Besides, it was Kareev who criticized "economic materialism" as an embodied idea of impersonal evolution of the society.

Therefore, in most cases, his name and his views had been subject of criticism for a long time without any attempts to reveal their rational content. It was only a factual content of his writings on history that had received positive evaluation. Over time, the situation changed, and nowadays these ideas are waiting to be comprehended.

Meanwhile, we think that the analysis of all social and philosophic problems in Kareev's writings is interrelated with his theoretical developments in philosophy of history, psychology and sociology. His interest in humanitarian sciences in their interaction and effort to develop general methodology for them are of great significance.

## **2. OBJECTIVES, METHODS AND PHASES OF THE STUDY**

The main goal of this article is to analyze methodological issues in Kareev's writings, including consideration of the role of philosophy of history in his system of historic knowledge, classification of sciences and the issues necessary related to their solution.

In considering this topic, we applied the principle of unity between the historic and the logic, personal approach and methods and ways of working with text.

It is Kareev's conceptual ideas that are the most important for revealing the topic. They not only preserved their significance, but became relevant in present time. He tried to systematize historic knowledge, to reveal differences in the nature of abstract notions used in philosophy of history, sociology and specific history, and to study the structure of historical process and the role of subjective synthesis in the comprehension of society and history. The specific approach of the Russian philosopher in solving these issues manifested itself most clearly in

his debates with the Western philosophers and within the Western European discussions on a wide range of philosophic issues.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

N.I. Kareev is the Russian scientist, philosopher, historian, sociologist. The range of his interests is so wide that it is difficult to define his disciplinary preferences. His contribution to the development of science can be appreciated in both Russia and Europe (Kareev worked in France and Poland). This work as well as many years of scientific inquiry resulted in the interesting research on history, sociology and methodology of science. Some of his works on this issue became a basis for writing this article.

We assume that Kareev's philosophic interests and preferences are very important in revealing the specifics of his views. It is known that Kareev was a positivist by his philosophic convictions who had a propensity to the views of Neo-Kantians, especially Rickert. He showed some interest in the works of M. Weber and took an active part in publishing Weber's works in Russia. Besides, he was the author of some interesting prefaces to these editions, for example, to the Russian translation of Weber's booklet "The City".

Kareev's classification of sciences is based on A. Komte's ideas. However, he criticizes the Frenchman, first, for his attitude to philosophy. The Russian philosopher believes that it is impossible to make our knowledge whole and absolute by merely scientific methods. We need assistance from philosophy. In this respect, philosophy (the sphere of creation, ideals, and subjectivism) is a necessary supplement to science, which contradicts to the famous Komte's attitude to philosophy. Second, Kareev considered insufficient succession in implementing his own principle to be the main mistake of the French philosopher. Namely, A. Komte should have placed psychology between biology and sociology. Kareev introduces this amendment in the Komte's classification of sciences. It is well known that Komte's classification of sciences does not mention psychology. However, the society does not consist of a number of individuals, but rather of people carrying out various activities, and mental interaction between them is important in this process. Thus, people's mental life is a particular case of public life. In our opinion, this was the reason for Kareev to include into classification psychology as a science, which plays the role of a mediator between biology and sociology. H. Spenser tried to correct A. Comte's mistake with regard to psychology by placing "basic psychology" between "basic biology" and "basic sociology". However, this attempt proved to be insufficient, as it was the matter of individual psychology. It is rather collective psychology, which studies the laws ruling psychological phenomena outside individual life, in

people and in the society, than individual psychology that is designed to play a special role in Kareev's classification of sciences. It should be noted that Kareev was the first, after the representatives of "historic school of law" (Savigny and Lazarus), to stressed the need to use collective psychology in the classification of sciences. Later, G. Tarde began to consider collective psychology within sociology.

We can speak about Kareev as a thinker who actively supported and promoted rationality of the psychological trend in sociology and used it in his pluralistic factor approach to solving the problems of social development. It was his advantage over other authors who solved these problems from one-sided perspectives. However, his pluralism quite often exaggerates the role of psychological factor in social life, which can be caused by his struggle against underestimation and even ignorance of the role of the psychological factor. Kareev is likely to inherit the interest in psychologism in the Kantian meaning from Neo-Kantians. M. Weber did not overlook this issue in his debates with the representatives of the Baden school. It would be safe to assume that the issue of the role played by psychology in social and historic cognition was equally significant for both philosophers. M. Weber agrees with Neo-Kantians in solving the issue of common significance of historic and sociological knowledge. He also supports Rickert in his not acknowledging psychology as a theoretic and methodological basis for sociology and history.' Kareev expressed similar ideas. Besides, antinaturalistic line in justifying historic science in Neo-Kantians and M. Weber was close to the Russian philosopher. In this respect, Kareev notes that nomological and phenomenological sciences are linked through nomological and phenomenological transitions from natural to humanitarian sciences. We can draw some parallels with the Weber's conception of "understanding", which deals with the researcher's "getting" into the mental states of other people and "experiencing" them to better understand them. In this discourse, M. Weber obviously opposes Rickert who was sure that the mental life of other people could not be immediately understood. Kareev shares M. Weber's view on this issue. He offers the researcher to take people's goals, interests and ideas as his own when studying social processes, and thus evaluate whether they correspond to the ideal. "It is the interested persons that can give the best answer for this question", he wrote, "even if their evaluation is far from being strictly scientific. In any case, this evaluation is a fact. Can a researcher ignore it? If not, then, naturally, he has to stand on the position of those who immediately deal with the facts studied by him". Here we should note that Kareev did not equal scientific truth and evaluation and advocated reasonable combination of objective consideration and evaluation in a study. He wrote: "Sciences that study a person's spiritual and social world differ from natural

sciences because their common notions mean not only distractions from the data of our experience, but also requirements to subjects and relationships thought in these abstractions". In Kareev's opinion, it is this assumption that deprives sociology of the opportunity to use the requirements of objectivism accepted in natural sciences. In this case, his approach and a theory based on it can be called a subjective synthesis as they both contain rational ideas of various viewpoints that claim the necessity of "subjective element" in cognizing history and society. His interest in the philosophic comprehension of history where subjective element plays a certain role seems to be still relevant.

Kareev gives pride of place to the philosophy of history. He assumes that it is derived from the classification of sciences and the system of historic knowledge as a synthetizing element and forms a special field of knowledge. This field of knowledge involves historiosophy as methodology and theory and historiology (theory of historic process) whose goal is to objectively represent the theory of historic process. This representation does not provide for considering gnoseological and deontological issues. Kareev separated gnoseological issues of history from ontology and made them the basis for another science, *historica*, or historic gnoseology. In this respect, it is important to note that he distinguished theory of philosophy of history (historiosophy) from philosophy of history itself.

The term "philosophy of history" appeared in the middle of the 18th century and originally involved a study of the past fates of humankind based on some general philosophic viewpoints and understanding of possible goal of historic life and powers to approach this goal. Although historiosophy was a synonym for philosophy of history, its subject included revealing the sense of historic life with regard to human existence. Thus, in his system of historic knowledge, Kareev represented historiosophy as a number of philosophic and scientific principles, which are necessary when we study philosophy of history, whereas philosophy of history is an application of this theory to the interpretation of a particular world-wide historical process.

Kareev argues that historiosophy and historiology differ in their tasks. Historiosophy deals with goals and criteria in evaluating actual course of history. Such subjective moments are unacceptable for historiography that "should only explain what is happening and how it is happening without any effect of our hopes, wishes, urges or ideals on its data and conclusions and without any evaluation, either utilitarian, or emotional, or ethical".

Historiology should express its principles basing on psychology and sociology. Besides, the part of social dynamics (theory of social changes and theory of the development of society) should play a special role in sociology. In this very part, historiography is supplemented by its

own function of “social morphology”. Kareev did not always insist on such separation of social dynamics and assumed that, in a broader sense, “perhaps, historiology... is nothing but social dynamics”.

He comes to the conclusion that a special science about theory of historical process should use methods of the sciences which study the same topic from various perspectives. First of all, it is true for sociology, psychology, philosophy of history, and historic science. It should be noted that no one had consistently considered the theory of historical process before Kareev.

The Russian philosopher’s merit is that he tried to create a theory of historic process taken abstractly, irrespective of a particular period or nation. This, in turn, served the main basis for creating classification of sciences, system of historic knowledge and program of scientific philosophy. In his reflections, Kareev comes to the conclusion that philosophy of history is a unifying element for all three bases aimed at revealing the essence of historical process (classification of sciences, system of historic knowledge, program of scientific philosophy). This enables the philosopher to discuss the possibilities of the philosophy of history as the area of “acceptable subjectivism”, development of ideals and its specific peculiarity as a foundation for the unity of ontology, gnoseology and deontology.

Kareev’s discourse on deontology deserves special attention. Philosophy is an area of necessary use of “admissible idealism”, or deontology. Kareev thinks that any scientific knowledge would be incomplete without this admission. In science, creative process is strictly limited by the object of study. In philosophy, it expands the limits of this object. Philosophy of history combines two elements necessary for cognition: “scientific element and philosophic element, element of submission to the object of knowledge and element of pure creation”. Thus, philosophical justification of any research is a necessary supplement to this research. It means that ontological statements (actual) should be supplemented by deontological (the ones that should be). Kareev included deontology in the so-called “program of scientific philosophy”. In the philosopher’s words, it was only a “sketch of program”, and the design was not further developed. However, this sketch is of some interest as the sphere of deontology is quite largely presented here. According to Kareev, the basis for this science is individual and social ethics. In his sketch of “the program of scientific philosophy”, he mentions its three components: anthropology as human nomology, philosophy of history as human phenomenology and ethics as deontology. Thus, in our opinion, the advantage of the philosopher’s synthesizing approach to scientific cognition (where scientific theory needs a combination of ontology, phenomenology and deontology to be complete, harmonious and whole) is stressed again. The philosopher was convinced that we can approach to the

understanding of the essence of external phenomena through cognizing ourselves mostly by means of deontology. In this case, the philosopher's view in defining the historic role of studied objects and extracting life purposes from this definition is close to the conceptions of I. Kant, I. Herder, G. Hegel and W. Humboldt. This thought was further developed in Kareev's discourse on the necessity of subjective approach to the study of historic process.

In his works, Kareev defended quite consistently the position of subjectivity in historic and sociologic knowledge. He inherited the interest in studying subjective mechanisms in the framework of sociological cognition from other Russian philosophers, P.L. Lavrov and N.K. Mikhailovskiy. After these thinkers had died (P.L. Lavrov in 1900, N.K. Mikhailovskiy in 1904), Kareev became a key theoretician of subjectivism in Russian social sciences.

From his viewpoint, subjective approach is necessary as a specific methodological principle of clarifying for ourselves what is happening outside us. This is an attempt to penetrate into being that is similar to one's own being. And this is something that is neither single nor subjective, but whole, objective though very similar to its own part.

In the 1890s, Kareev uses the terms "subjective method", "subjective philosophy". Besides, he offers to distinguish between "lawful subjectivism" within objective approach to the processes under examination and subjectivism as a special predilection and one-sidedness that are common among historians.

The meaning of the notion of "subjectivism" was defined as something that depends from a subject's activity and is caused by it. Therefore, he speaks about two kinds of subjectivism: regular (legal) and occasional (inacceptable). The first one is based on the specifics of social phenomena and relationships in society. These refer to interests, consciousness, will and people's ideas of the society and themselves from the perspective of ethical ideas.

Besides, N.I. Kareev's merit is defining the procedure of using subjectivity by a sociologist or a historian. The procedural imperatives, as it has already been noted, include an act of penetration and experiencing by the researcher feelings and ideas of people as participants of the studied events.

The philosopher acknowledged objectivism the greatest ideal of scientificity and stated that science should not depend on any ideologies or collective, political and religious believes, since it is this dependence that forms the basis for occasional subjectivism, "Both objective science and subjective moral ideal demand the same: first of all, be impartial either in stating laws, or in evaluating them, or in judging them". This assumption can be considered productive in a sense that it fixes the importance of evaluating subjects and events in

consciousness. Evaluation involves a subjective establishing of a value, which, in turn, is an objective property of real phenomena.

Of course, acknowledgement of two forms of subjectivism and their historical connection is Kareev's original view. However, in our opinion, the positive moment of his conception is the recognition of a worldview subjectivity as a true component of social and historic knowledge. The philosopher thinks that a subjective element is also extremely important for creating the formula of progress, this central idea of philosophy of history. This formula involves developmental laws that define any historical process. These laws can be discovered through studying reality, "but it is setting an ideal goal for the historical process that turns the concept of development in the concept of progress". Thus, deriving the notion of "progress" from the notion of "development" becomes possible only due to the existence of the ideal. Kareev is convinced that introduction of the ideals in the study of reality will greatly facilitate the process of cognition. Obviously, it is because the development pursuant to the ideal is a theoretically planned stage-by-stage achievement of a certain goal. As Kareev denies the regularity of historical process in general, the ideal is meant to exclude chaotic dominance of accidents. However, the ideal does not exist without the real. The fact and the core of the ideal existence has a dual origin: "Here we deal with either making conclusions according to the facts or the pursuit of the known ideal". Thus, when we unite these two sources of the ideal, we proceed from the actually existing.

It should be mentioned that Kareev refers to the existence of subjective element within the admitted idealization (necessary for philosophic comprehension of history). Then, the use of subjectivism as both our own attitude to objective facts and the pursuit of the ideal becomes clear. Kareev's detailed discussion of "acceptable idealism" makes it possible to use a subjective element in this way and states difference between "admitted idealism" and "legal subjectivism".

The idea of progress is an area where subjectivism means a pursuit of the ideal. This subjectivism is neither voluntary nor unlimited and therefore it is located within objective social process. Thus, the idea of progress has two meanings: the subjective that is based on its a-priori peculiarity and the objective that is based on the widest possible generalization of a human history. This synthesis of the subjective and objective is very important for understanding Kareev's discourse about historical process; however, both components should be absolutely clear.

It is a large generalization of human history that causes some difficulty for this understanding. In Kareev's opinion, it requires our knowledge of historical process to be

complete, harmonious and integral. It is only possible if we study this process in general (as an abstract concept) and do not directly address to the history of a particular nation. It was already noted that this abstraction is possible if we account for both scientific achievements and subjective needs together with related ideals. This exactly means synthesis based on the philosophy of history, which includes the above-mentioned necessary supplements to the scientific (in the present case, historical) study.

Philosophy of history aims to develop a principle of philosophical study of historical events or methodological justification of this study. Methodological principle cannot be derived from the study of these event but, on the contrary, is introduced into their philosophical examination. It is designed on the basis of sociological law of the development of the society. Many scientists before Kareev and after him were interested in methodological problems including a place occupied by philosophy of history in the system of scientific knowledge. However, it is his assumptions about the necessity of separating the areas of sociology, philosophy of history and history that were further developed in the writings of M. Weber and P.A. Sorokin, the key sociologists of the 20th century.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Different analysis of modern social processes prioritize the development of integral theoretic system of the philosophic knowledge of the society. Kareev was sure in the necessity of this system as early as in the 19th century. This task cannot be settled without the comprehension of an important problem — the integrity of humanitarian knowledge — so that to reveal its significance for the development of science in general and creation of a uniform scientific picture of the world.

Kareev's multidimensional theoretic heritage largely predetermined the destiny of his ideas in history. When defining the place of this thinker in the history of social thought, many researchers mostly described him as a supporter of psychological approach in sociology. These conclusions resulted from the study of Kareev's solution for the qualifying issue of internal branches of sociology and interdisciplinary links of sociology with other humanitarian sciences. The experience in dealing with various issues within this topic enabled us to conclude that Kareev always strived to adopt a principle of pluralistic synthesizing approach when studying philosophic problems of history. In his opinion, it had to fully exclude any research predilections. Taking into account this creative specifics in solving historic, philosophic and sociologic problems, we can regard Kareev as a thinker who supports and uses rational moments of psychological orientation in sociology

A detailed analysis of A. Komte's critical positivism and his classification of sciences was a starting point for Kareev to deal with social and philosophic problems. This stimulated him to create his own classification. The main goal of the separating and grouping within the classification of sciences suggested by the Russian philosopher is to reveal some disciplines using various scientific approaches to interpret a uniform object — human history. Kareev suggests a gradual transition from one science to another in accordance with the main Komte's principle of building the classification of sciences and strives to prevent mixing sociology and philosophy of history, as, in his opinion, this is an obstacle for establishing sociology as a science. The idea of sciences classification, in turn, created other ideas: to elaborate a system of historic knowledge and a program of scientific philosophy, which are directly relevant to revealing the sense of historical process. Kareev made a productive effort to analyze the possibilities of philosophy of history as an area of "acceptable subjectivism" to develop ideas and its specific peculiarity as a foundation for the unity of ontological and gnoseological aspects within this problem.

The philosopher sees the task of philosophy in developing the principle of philosophic study of historic phenomena or in methodological justification of this study. Methodological principle is not derived from the study of these events. On the contrary, it is introduced into their philosophic consideration. It is designed on the basis of the sociological law of society development.

The thinker considers various problems of social and philosophical nature at the junction of history, philosophy and sociology in his works. Many of them have an original solution based on consistently defended idea of the synthesis of mentioned sciences in the cognition of social development. These ideas retain all their currency in the present time as well, including the idea to create a program of scientific philosophy. Kareev failed to implement it; however, he developed original principles of its creation. From this viewpoint, the philosopher's thoughts are of some interest for understanding the significance of philosophy not only in its "evaluative" form, but also in its "reflective" (scientific) form.

Some theoretical provisions developed by Kareev failed to stand the test of time; however, they involve the conceptual ideas whose solving remain important for modern science. These include the revival of the interest in the principles of philosophic analysis of historic reality and study of the possibilities of humanitarian sciences for developing scientific knowledge.

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