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## **CREATIVE HERITAGE OF B.F. PORSHNEV AND ITS MODERN VALUE**

[Chapter [I. Historical sciences](#) omitted]

### **II. PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

Porshnev himself considered the subject of his main specialty to be the problems of anthropogenesis:

For many years I have been hearing caste reproaches: why am I dealing with this range of issues, if my direct specialty is the history of Europe in the 17th-18th centuries. I would like to take this opportunity to correct this misunderstanding: the science of the beginning of human history - and, above all, paleopsychology - is my main specialty. If, in addition to it, I have been doing a lot of history in my life, as well as philosophy, sociology, and political economy, this does not discredit me in the indicated main area of my research. But the questions of prehistory arise before me in those aspects in which my colleagues of related specialties do not study them. "

The presentation of Porshnev's contribution to the science of anthropogenesis in the form of his contribution to a whole series of completely independent sciences is extremely difficult, because these sciences on the problem of anthropogenesis intersect to such an extent that it is almost impossible to draw a line between them. However, there is one circumstance that makes this path justified.

Porshnev clearly understood the ambiguous role of the special sciences in the study of the problems of anthropogenesis. On the one hand, paleoanthropologists, paleontologists and paleoarchaeologists - hardly the main "legitimate" researchers of human origins - were extremely superficially familiar with the serious scientific results obtained in zoology, psychology, neurophysiology, and sociology. On the other hand, these listed sciences themselves were extremely poorly developed precisely when applied to the Pleistocene time:

Not a single zoologist has taken seriously the ecology of the Quaternary ancestors of humans, and in fact the systematics proposed by paleontologists for the animal species surrounding these ancestors cannot replace ecology, biocenology, and ethology. Not a single psychologist or neurophysiologist, for his part, took up the phylogenetic aspect of his science, preferring to listen to the improvisations of specialists in a completely different part: those who know how to excavate and systematize finds, but who are not able to put even the simplest experience in a physiological or psychological laboratory. Not a single qualified sociologist or philosopher has written anything about the biological prehistory of humans that was not ultimately induced by the same paleoarchaeologists and paleoanthropologists who themselves needed scientific guidance on these issues.

It turns out a vicious circle ...

In order to break through this vicious circle, Porshnev resolutely set about filling the above-mentioned gaps in zoology, physiology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc.

Porshnev is a materialist. And in this respect he is not alone in the circle of anthropologists. However, he is almost the only materialist researcher who took into account and assimilated the entire array of religious criticism of materialistic ideas about anthropogenesis, which has accumulated since the publication of Darwin's "The Origin of Species". Of all the materialistic concepts of the origin of man, Porshnev's concept today remains the only one that has managed to eliminate all those naively simplified elements of the materialist approach to the problem, which religious criticism has long and quite justifiably pointed out to.

Without any exaggeration, we can say: if at the level of modern knowledge of facts there is an alternative to religious ideas about anthropogenesis, then this is Porshnev's concept. Even despite the fact that no one has been working with her professionally for 25 years. All other concepts cannot be recognized as such an alternative.

I want to emphasize: no matter how great and significant specific discoveries in various aspects of this vast problem, no matter how promising for further research the bold hypotheses put forward by him, the most important significance of Porshnev's research in the field of anthropogenesis lies in the field of philosophy: in the development of such a concept that in the context of scientific knowledge at the end of the 20th century, it *does not need a hypothesis about a creator* .

It is characteristic that, responding to accusations of "antiscientific", "striving for sensation", etc., which began to be heard about Porshnev's search for "Bigfoot", he emphasized precisely the philosophical significance of his discoveries:

And today very few people still understand that troglodytes are a great event in philosophy. There was a sensation in philosophy, citizens of the judge, in philosophy, but this was not what the accusation had in mind. Materialism is the healer of blindness. Thanks to him, we saw what was under our noses, but which we should not have seen. Not a monster, not a worthless wonder of mountains and thickets, but the primary fact of "philosophical anthropology".

According to Porshnev, two false postulates hindered a serious scientific breakthrough in the study of anthropogenesis.

1. The conviction that the archaeological remains of the life of fossil hominids prove that they have abstract-logical (conceptual), creative thinking, and therefore require recognition by people not only of neoanthropes, but also of paleoanthropes (Neanderthals) and even more ancient species.

This postulate has two main roots - the myth of hunting large animals as the main occupation of the human ancestor and the myth of his invention of fire.

2. The conviction that the evolutionary form that preceded homo sapiens was extinct disappeared from the face of the earth immediately after the appearance of this latter.

Porshnev's main work, summarizing his research in the field of anthropogenesis and outlining a program for further research, - *On the Beginning of Human History (Problems of Paleopsychology)* - was published two years after the death of the author - in 1974.

The published book does not include three chapters from the manuscript. Two of them included a thorough and well-grounded refutation of the two named myths underlying the first false postulate. Forced to shorten the text, Porshnev decided that it was more important to preserve the methodology than the details of empirical evidence. The third chapter of those not included concerned the second false postulate. Some of this chapter has been incorporated into the text of the book. But not all of them. On the whole, Porshnev considered it less successful. Looking ahead, I would like to note that research on the subject of this chapter is the most difficult, but also the most important for the further development of the entire concept and even the entire science of "human society and social man".

### **III. ZOOLOGY**

Proclaiming the need to overcome the above-mentioned zoological prejudices, Porshnev wrote:

The dispute will not be about facts, for most of the facts of paleoanthropology and paleoarcheology have a high degree of reliability, but about the glasses through which they are used to looking at these facts.

#### **1. Diet of the human ancestor and the origin of fire**

In two unpublished chapters, Porshnev actually proved two things.

1. A human ancestor could not have been a hunter. For this is contrary to the data of zoology. The ancestor had the only niche he could occupy: corpse-eating. It was for cutting the carcasses of animal corpses that the famous "tools" were adapted. Just like other animals, teeth, canines, and claws are used for such operations.
2. The ancestor of man did not "invent" fire. Fire, decay were an inevitable by-product of his processing of stone tools. He had to "learn" to extinguish the fire, as well as utilize its beneficial properties. Just like other animals adapt to the specifics of their ecological niche - weave cobwebs, build nests, build beehives, block the river with dams. Or, say, how domestic cats "learn" to use the heat of a table lamp, central heating battery, etc.

Therefore, there is no reason to consider the presence of fire and stone tools as a sign of the appearance of "man". Only a neanthrope can be recognized as a person in the exact sense of the word.

What happened in anthropology under the influence of Porshnev's work?

A glaring injustice has happened, which, alas, is not uncommon in the history of science. In the beginning, they disagreed with Porshnev, argued, and then began to simply leave, evade disputes and discussions. The article "Materialism and idealism in the formation of man" (one of his first

publications on the problems of anthropogenesis), writes Porshnev, *"did not even bring me judgment - excommunication. Although I did not call any of our specialists an idealist, almost all of them grappled for the hats . "*

And only when the scientific community of anthropologists managed to almost completely isolate themselves from Porshnev, completely free themselves from the need to listen to him, a "miracle" occurred in the community of anthropologists: Porshnev's conclusions regarding the origin of fire and the way of food of the closest human ancestors were accepted. Today, the vast majority of anthropologists actually share the conclusions for the recognition of which Porshnev has fought selflessly and unsuccessfully for almost twenty years. However, these selfless efforts are practically unknown to anyone today or are completely forgotten. The conclusions received recognition, the correctness of which was first proved by Porshnev, but his superiority was not recognized.

Unlike the first two myths or prejudices noted by Piston, the third is still shared by the absolute majority of specialists. It is this third prejudice that prevents one from seeing the theme of the divergence of paleoanthropes and neoanthropes (as a key biological problem of the transition to sociality) and all its most complicated aspects.

As mentioned above, this prejudice is extremely simple: the appearance of man led to a very rapid extinction of the ancestral form. To overcome this prejudice, Porshnev launched an offensive in four directions.

First, he thoroughly, in all aspects and nuances, analyzed all those insoluble contradictions to which any attempts to reconstruct the appearance of a person inevitably lead, while maintaining the named prejudice. Porshnev convincingly showed that such reconstructions, with all their differences, inevitably lead to the same logical dead end, from which there is only one honest way out: to admit that without a hypothesis about a creator, the problem of the appearance of a person is fundamentally insoluble. This direction again lies at the intersection of zoology and philosophy.

Secondly, Porshnev showed that the traditional myth contradicts all the available data of zoology, with which, as already noted, most anthropologists were not familiar. More precisely, from the zoological literature, anthropologists knew well only journalism, replete with fashionable anthropomorphisms, but not the scientific zoological literature itself. All the data of zoology convincingly indicate that the rule of speciation is the long-term coexistence of a new species, budded from an ancestral form, with the latter. Consequently, the burden of proof, in a dispute between supporters and opponents, that the appearance of man was the rarest zoological exception, must lie with the supporters of exclusivity.

Thirdly, Porshnev carried out a gigantic work on collecting facts about the parallel existence of the closest ancestral form (paleoanthropus) next to man (neoanthropus) not only in prehistoric times, but also in the modern era up to the present day. He showed that the relict animal ancestor of man, which has survived to this day, known under various names (in particular, as "Bigfoot"), although somewhat degraded, having lost some of the skills that have become redundant, but remained a representative of the same ancestral species - a relict paleoanthropus.

The final book of 34 author's pages, summarizing the many years of selfless work of Porshnev and his closest collaborators, met with fierce resistance from the scientific community, but still came out:

True, the book was printed in such a circulation as the medieval early printed books - one hundred and eighty copies. But she entered the world of human books. Let the eminent professor of anthropology rush about the institutions at the last minute, demanding that the printing of the book overthrowing Darwinism be interrupted. The book is out. Let the director of the Institute of Anthropology at Moscow State University ordered not to purchase a single copy from the library. It existed from now on.

Fourthly, Porshnev reconstructed the appearance of man, proceeding from alternative premises corresponding to the data of zoological science.

In the course of work in the fourth direction, Porshnev had to distinguish himself with serious research not only in zoology, but also in a number of other sciences.

## **2. Divergence of paleoanthropes and neoanthropes**

The topic of divergence belongs not only to anthropology, but lies, so to speak, at the intersection of zoology and cultural studies.

Human culture, according to Porshnev, grew out of the divergence of paleoanthropes and neoanthropes, out of the need of the latter, interacting with the former, to increasingly move away from the forms of interaction imposed by them. Therefore, let's look at the zoological phenomenon of divergence from the point of view of its cultural consequences.

Since the Porsche analysis of the nature and the first steps of divergence is presented only in the unpublished chapter mentioned above (in the published texts you can find only hints), I will cite extensive extracts from it.

Having passed through a whole series of ecological crises and acquired in the course of natural selection absolutely amazing biological and neurophysiological "tools" of adaptation, the animal ancestor of man at the end of the Middle Pleistocene faced a new crisis that threatened him with inevitable extinction. This ancestor, in accordance with the studies of Porshnev mentioned in the previous section, built a unique symbiotic relationship with numerous predators, herbivores, and even with birds using the neurosignal mechanism of interdict (it will be discussed below, in the **Physiology** section ). The possibility of using the biomass of animals that died naturally or were killed by predators for food was provided by a tough instinct that did not allow him to kill anyone.

And so, along with a critical reduction in the biomass they got, they had to compete with predators in the sense that they still start killing someone. But how to combine two such opposite instincts: "do not kill" and "kill"?

Judging by many data, nature suggested a [...] narrow path (which, however, later led evolution to an unprecedented path). The solution to the biological paradox was that instinct did not prevent them from killing members of their own species. [...] The ecological gap that remained for self-salvation in a specialized species of bipedal primates doomed by nature, omnivorous by nature, but cadaverous in their main biological profile, consisted in

using part of their population as a self-reproducing food source. Something remotely similar to such a phenomenon is not unknown in zoology. It is called adelphophagy ("eating fellows"), sometimes reaching a more or less noticeable character in some species, although it never becomes the main or one of the main sources of food.

After analyzing numerous zoological data on cases of adelphophagy, as well as archaeological data indicating the attempts of a paleoanthrope to embark on this path, Porshnev comes to the conclusion:

The only way out of the contradictions was the splitting of the very species of paleanthropes into two species. From the previous species, a new one relatively quickly and violently broke away, becoming the ecological opposite. If paleoanthropes did not kill anyone except their own kind, then neoanthropes represented an inversion: as they turned into hunters, they did not kill exactly paleoanthropes. They initially differ from other troglodytes in that they do not kill these other troglodytes. And much, much later, having lacerated themselves from the troglodytes, they no longer only killed the latter, like any other animals, like "non-humans", but also killed their own kind, that is, neoanthropes, each time with the motive that they were not quite people, rather closer to "non-humans" (criminals, strangers, gentiles).

An analysis of zoological data (starting with Darwin) on various forms of speciation leads Porshnev to the conclusion that there is a kind of "spontaneous artificial" selection underlying the divergence:

It was by completely "unconscious" and spontaneous intensive selection of paleoanthropes that they singled out special populations from their ranks, which later became a special species. The form, isolated from crossing, apparently met the requirement of compliance with interdict. They were big-faced. They were quite successful in suppressing the impulse to kill paleoanthropes. But the latter could eat part of their offspring. "Big-faced" could also be induced to overpower the instinct "not to kill", that is, to induce to kill for paleoanthropes as "ransom" of various animals, at first at least sick and weak, in addition to the previous sources of meat food. One of the symptoms for spontaneous selection was probably the hairlessness of their bodies, as a result of which the entire surrounding animal world could visually differentiate them from hairy, harmless and safe - paleoanthropes.

This process cannot be empirically described, since the fossil data are poor, it can only be reconstructed by a retrospective analysis of later cultural phenomena, spinning them back, going back to the lost initial links. We will accept as a methodological premise the idea that the development of culture does not continue, but denies and in every possible way transforms what people have left behind the threshold of history. In particular, the entire huge complex of phenomena related to the varieties of funeral cults, that is, the endlessly diverse treatment of the corpses of fellows and tribesmen, is a denial and prohibition of the habits of paleoanthropes. People of different historical epochs and cultures "buried" in every possible way, that is, they protected, hid the dead, which made it impossible to eat them. An exception, which, perhaps, just goes back to the turning point of interest to us, is the abandonment of the dead specifically to be devoured by the "devas" in the ancient pre-Zoroastrian religion of the Iranians and in Parsism. Do not the "devas" appear here as the successors of fossil paleoanthropines? Perhaps the same can be suspected in the rite of lowering the dead on a raft downstream of the river, in the rite of leaving him on the branches of a tree, high in the mountains, etc.

Porshnev's interpretation of ancient burials as manifestations of the first cultural prohibitions will be given below in the section **Culturology** .

Traces of the use of a specially grown part of the neoanthropic population as a food base for paleoanthropes have been preserved, Porshnev notes, in the so-called initiation rites:

Their essence lies in the fact that adolescents who have reached puberty (mostly boys and to a lesser extent girls), raised in significant isolation from the adult composition of the tribe, are subjected to rather painful procedures and even partial mutilation, symbolizing killing. This rite is performed somewhere in the forest and expresses, as it were, the sacrifice of these adolescents and to be devoured by forest monsters. The latter are fantastic replacements of the once not fantastic, but real devourers - paleoanthropes, just as the action itself was not a performance, but a real mortification. Science learned about how great a role this phenomenon played at the origins of mankind, which survived in the form of initiations, from the wonderful book of V. Ya. Propp, who showed, that a huge part of the fairy-tale mythological folklore is a late transformation and rethinking of the same initial core: the sacrifice of young men and women to the monster, or, more precisely, this act, already transformed into different versions of the initiation rite.

Porshnev explains the long-term preservation of human sacrifices, already isolated from the function of serving as a forage base for paleoanthropes, by the following reasons:

If at one time the killing of people was associated with the specific relations of neoanthropes with paleoanthropines and very early was replaced by the sacrificial killing of animals, in particular cattle, then in Central and South America there was almost no large livestock and the primitive rite survived until the time of complex cults, while the ancient Greeks already from time immemorial, they replaced human sacrifices with hecatomb mountains offered to deities of all ranks - slaughtered cattle.

After analyzing numerous data on the evolution of sacrifices, Porshnev summarizes:

Thus, in our eyes, first the curve of the ascending biological significance of these sacrifices is restored, that is, an increase in the amount of food sacrificed for non-humans (or rather, anti-humans), and later the symbolic function begins and then abruptly replaces this real biological function. The latter can come both directly from human sacrifices (religious suicide, self-mutilation, self-restraint in the form of fasting and asceticism, confinement), and from victims of livestock and food (dedication of animals, sacrifice of the first fruits, feeding a fetish, burning, splashing, libation).

Porshnev summarizes the analysis of the divergence as follows:

So, if, on the one hand, we grope in the depths of the divergence the killing of a significant part of the juveniles of some kind of detaching variety (the number of these juveniles was gradually reduced to the rite of sacrificing only the firstborn), then, on the other hand, we also find the mutual killing of each other by adult male individuals (the reduced form in this case is a duel). Slavery, that is, the preservation of life for the wounded and prisoners, and its subsequent transformations and mitigation in the further economic evolution of mankind, and on the other hand, all forms of peaceful neighborhood, that is, the transformation of wars into stability of borders, into the delimitation of coexisting ethnic

groups originated from this second line. , cultures and states. Wars remained as sporadic cataclysms that humanity still cannot get rid of.

But our topic is just the beginning of human history. Divergence or detachment from paleoanthropes of one branch, which served as food for the original, is what we find at the source, but a direct study of this biological phenomenon is unthinkable. We can only reconstruct it, as well as the entire overwhelming force of its consequences, almost exclusively by the later results of this revolution: with the help of our knowledge of historical man and human history.

### **3. Gender and family relations within neoanthropes**

The need to feed paleoanthropes with a part of their own population, which can be mainly males, formed on the threshold of history a kind of "gender" relations within the neoanthrope species. Contemporary feminism could find a lot here to understand the origin of the problems with which it has to work:

Birthing females probably gave and fed considerable offspring. As for the males, their number could be much less to ensure the production of abundant juveniles. But did the latter grow to adulthood? [...] One must think that this young, reared or, rather, feeding near the camps on pasture of vegetation until the threshold of the age of reproduction, was killed and served as food for paleoanthropes. Only a very few could survive and become one of those adults who now spun off from the paleoanthropes, gradually forming isolated populations of the breadwinners of these paleoanthropes.

Differences in biological value, which male and female neoanthropines represented for relations with paleoanthropines, against the background of the developed "artificial" selection of the instinct to "kill" led to the emergence of a purely "male affair" - war:

If from modern wars with their most complicated class, political, and economic reasons we descend as deeply as possible into the past cognizable for historical science in the era of barbarism, we find the increasing significance there not of conquest, but of the battle itself, of the battle itself. In pre-feudal times, the result of the war is the killed people who remained on the battlefield. [...] And in the depths of primitiveness, and even more so, there was neither the conquest of the natives by the conquerors, nor their conversion into tributaries, nor the seizure of their territories. Only men went out to mutual extermination (if we leave aside the legend of the Amazons); [...] from a biological point of view, the disappearance of even a part of the male population did not hinder the reproduction and expansion of the population while maintaining the productive part of the female.

Here it is advisable to cite the published results of special studies by Porshnev in the field of ecology of the closest human ancestors, for they directly relate to future human "family values". We are talking about the "shuffling herd" as a form of coexistence of the closest human ancestors:

Their biological way of life, the way of obtaining meat food, at a certain stage presented almost unbearable requirements for the mobility, mobility of these creatures, both in terms of speed of movement, and in terms of duration and distances covered. These requirements led to the rupture of herd cohesion: females with juveniles (for a very long time dependent



in hominids) lagged behind, separated from adult males, and not seasonally (as, for example, in herds of mountain goats), but without the opportunity to reunite. But on the huge territory of these migrations, other males temporarily joined these females with young animals, in order to then, in turn, break away from them.

If you insist on the word "herd", then this is a completely special kind of herd: it swells, then shrinks in volume, then disintegrates into units, it does not have a constant composition of individuals. One and the same individual can be consistently a member of different communities as they join, disperse, and shuffle. [...] In these shuffling groups, there could not be a stable family nucleus, like family groups of gibbons, nor a "harem family" of baboons - males, which generally constitute a zoogeographic element, usually more mobile than females bound by juveniles, in this case, having detached themselves from their females, they no longer returned to them again, but adjoined somewhere else, the third, making, perhaps, enormous spatial movements. This, apparently, explains the appearance of the so-called promiscuity - a phenomenonologically proven as the initial stage of the human family, although completely uncharacteristic of animals.

Porshnev's analysis of the emerging cultural prohibitions associated with the further evolution of family and sexual relations of people will be discussed below in the section **Culturology** .

These extracts partly provide an answer to the question of the reasons for the gigantic, but almost unaccountable resistance from fellow scientists and the "public" in general, which Porshnev had to face all his life. The introduction of this concept into scientific circulation, into the sphere of wide public discussion, can cause a culture shock of unprecedented scale and depth.

All universal human values, both religious and secular, both "Western" and "Eastern", will require a profound revision, rethinking, and "re-justification." Indeed, on the one hand, the entire cultural "self-consciousness" of a person was formed due to the need to "distance" from his past, from his ancestor (more on this below), but, on the other hand, the actually achieved "distancing" is reliably provided by only one : the naive belief that "we", by definition, from "the very beginning" are "their" (real ancestors) the opposite.

And here the "clever" Porshnev appears and tries to open "us" our eyes to the fact that "we" are just turning into this very opposite (and will be turning for a long time), while our appearance on earth "we" owe to some disgusting animal , which specially brought "us" by artificial selection to fulfill the sole function of serving him as a food source! Something like a "thinking" beef cow ...

Porshnev remarked in one place: if you summarize all the ethical ideas about the disgusting, vile, dirty, unworthy of man, you get nothing more than a real image of a paleoanthrope from the times of divergence. This means that the image of the first people who, looking at the paleoanthropus, as in a mirror, slowly began to "correct".

How to live knowing that "we", people, by biological definition, are "worse than animals", that killing one's own kind is not a "deviation", but our true "our" nature, which distinguishes "us" from all other animals (the latter - this is still an exception, not a rule)?

How to live knowing that the beautiful custom of giving flowers is just the result of a deep and long-term transformation of "our" most ancient and completely "ugly" main function - to present as a "gift" to some vile animals their own children, produced for this in large quantities and killed with your own hands?

The image of a "highly moral person" as just a difficult and not fully achieved result of historical development is a weak and, most importantly, completely *unusual* consolation ...

How is it "unaccountably" not to be afraid? How not to reject it firmly? How not to try to refute? How not to shut up your ears if you can't refute?

#### IV. LINGUISTICS

As part of the study of the "phenomenon of human speech" Porshnev convincingly showed that the sounds made by animals cannot serve as the starting point of human language. Animal sounds are reflexively linked to the situation. On the contrary, the complete "detachment" of a word as a physiological phenomenon from its meaning (sense) is a key condition that allows it to perform the function of a "word" in human speech:

The concept of "sign" has two cardinal features: the main signs 1) are interchangeable in relation to the denotation, 2) have no causal connection with it either by similarity or involvement.

Studies of the physiological prerequisites of human speech allowed Porshnev to translate the problem of "sign" into the genetic plane - "*which of these two signs is more original?*"

The answer is: the second. This is indirectly evidenced by, by the way, the semasiological nature of proper names in modern speech: if they, like all words, satisfy the second criterion, then substitutability with another sign is expressed in proper names weaker, and in the limit even tends to zero [...] ... In other words, proper names in modern speech activity are monuments, albeit worn out, of that archaic time when words did not matter at all.

Therefore, in the starting point, the word "does not matter":

Linguistic signs appeared as an antithesis, as a denial of reflex (conditioned and unconditioned) stimuli of signs, indicators, symptoms, signals. [...] Human linguistic signs are basically defined as antagonists to what is perceived or served by any animal.

On the other hand, Porshnev showed that of the three main functions of signs of human speech (semantics, syntax, pragmatics) identified by semiotics, the most ancient and in this sense the most important is the pragmatic function - the relation of the word to human behavior.

Summing up his analytical review of research on the psychology of speech, Porshnev throws a bridge from linguistics - through psychology - to physiology:

As for the latest advances in the psychology of speech, we can now generalize what has been said above: the prospect of showing the control function of the second signal system,

of human speech signs, both in the lower mental functions, including in the work of the sense organs, in reception, in perception, and in higher mental functions and, finally, in the sphere of actions, activities. The forecast is justified that little by little, with further advances in science, nothing from the human psyche and almost nothing from the physiological processes in humans will be left out of the bracket.

The latter (the control function of speech in relation to physiological processes) has not only been analyzed in a number of cases by modern science, but is also included in some special "practices": for example, all the well-known "miracles" demonstrated by "yogis" reveal precisely the ability to relying on the mechanisms of the second signaling system, consciously control even genetically the most ancient physiological functions of the body, including those that are under the control of the autonomic nervous system, that is, they are common for humans and plants.

On the same subject, Porshnev writes elsewhere:

Human words are capable of overturning what was developed by the "first signaling system" - conditioned reflex connections created by higher nervous activity and even innate, hereditary, unconditioned reflexes. It, like a storm, can burst into seemingly reliable physiological functions of the body. She can sweep them away, turn them into opposites, disperse and reshuffle them in a new way. [...] There is no such biological instinct in a person, there is no such primary signal reflex that could not be transformed, canceled, replaced by the opposite through the means of the second signal system - speech.

An analysis of the neurophysiological prerequisites for the formation of speech in the closest ancestors of man allowed Porshnev to assert that the "word" arose as an instrument of coercion by one another, an external "order", from which it was impossible to evade. This corresponds to the data of linguistics about the greatest antiquity among the parts of speech of the verb, and of the nouns - proper names (which arose as signs of the prohibition to touch, touch).

Therefore, it is necessary to assume that one individual "forced" the other to do something contrary (opposite) to the signals prompted by its sensory sphere: otherwise, there would be no biological meaning in the occurrence of this mechanism.

Even such a cursory and superficial review shows how much Porshnev's approach to the analysis of the origin of "sociality" is richer and more promising than the traditional reasoning about "joint work activity." As if bees or beavers are not "working" together.

Only with the appearance of speech, language can we talk about the appearance of man (and human labor). Porshnev proved that in the biblical "in the beginning there was the word" much more materialism (and Marxism) than in references to "labor", "collective hunting", etc. However, the "word" that really was "in the beginning" was the bearer of compulsion, not meaning, not designation.

Having analyzed a huge array of studies by domestic and foreign experts who have studied various aspects of human speech (the second signal system, according to Pavlov), Porshnev states that the general development of science has come close to solving the question of how the "work" of an animal differs from human labor:

The key phenomenon of human labor is the subordination of the will of the worker as the law of a certain conscious goal. In the language of modern psychology, this can be exteroinstruction (command) or autoinstruction (intention, design).

Labor in the strict human sense presupposes something more than the "synergy" of actions; it presupposes the *coercion* of one another. That in the course of development is internalized into "self-compulsion", etc. The initial biological situation, which led to the advancement of compulsion to the fore, is generated by the divergence of the ancestral species, as mentioned above.

True, here again begins to "smell" of Marxism, exploitation, surplus value ... For more details, see below in the section on **Economic Sciences** .

All further development of speech communication consisted in the development of more and more complex tools for protection against the need to automatically execute a "command", on the one hand, and tools for breaking such protection. This will be discussed in the following sections of this review.

In linguistics, almost the same thing happened as in anthropology: Porshnev is practically not remembered (with a few exceptions), no one is explicitly involved in the further development of the Porshnev paradigm, however, implicitly, the main conclusions of Porshnev are actually recognized by most linguists today.

## **V. PHYSIOLOGY OF HIGHER NERVOUS ACTIVITY**

The second most important "invasion" of Porshnev in related sciences was his research in the field of physiology of higher nervous activity.

### **1. The highest form of inhibition of vertebrates**

Turning to the classical studies of Pavlov and Ukhtomsky, Porshnev put an end to their almost forgotten today long-standing dispute about how the center that "controls" the behavior of an animal works. The essence of the "synthesis" carried out by Porshnev consisted in the proposal of a "bidominant model":

At each given moment of the body's life, as a rule, there are two centers (two groups, constellations of centers on different floors), working according to opposite principles: one - "according to Pavlov," according to the principle of unconditioned and conditioned reflexes, the other - "according to Ukhtomsky", according to the dominant principle. One is the excitation pole, the other is the inhibition pole. One externally manifests itself in behavior, in any action of the organism, the other does not appear outwardly, is hidden, invisible, since it is extinguished by numerous incoherent, or diffuse, excitations flowing to it. However, with all their antagonism, at the first pole [...] the principle of dominant is also manifested in a subordinate form, and at the second, again in a subordinate form, the principle of unconditioned and conditioned reflexes is manifested.

The dominant principle is fully realized only at the inhibition pole, that is, as an *inhibitory dominant* . But at the same time the possibility of inversion of these centers remains, the possibility of "inversion of the inhibitory dominant".

All external stimuli, falling into the sensory sphere of the animal, are differentiated into "relevant" and "irrelevant". The first are sent to the "Pavlov center", the second - to the "Ukhtomsky center". In accordance with the dominant principle, this second center quickly "overflows" and enters the inhibition phase. In other words, everything that can interfere with the desired action is collected in one place and is resolutely inhibited. Thus, the "Ukhtomsky center" provides an opportunity for the "Pavlov center" to build complex chains of reflex connections (the first signal system) for the implementation of the "business" biologically necessary for the animal without interference:

According to the proposed view, any excited center (we will conditionally express ourselves this way for simplicity), which is dominant at a given moment in the sphere of excitation, is associated with some other center, which at the same moment is in a state of inhibition. In other words, another definite behavioral act, which is predominantly inhibited, is correlated with the current behavioral act.

It is precisely such hidden "behavioral acts" that are useful to the animal only by their "attractive" power for everything unnecessary, and are discovered by the experimental physiologist in the so-called "ultraparadox" phase in the form of an "inadequate reflex": instead of drinking, the animal suddenly begins to "itch" " etc.

This "paired" mechanism of "Pavlov-Ukhtomsky" conceals a whole revolution in the animal kingdom, for it opens up the possibility for one animal to invade the "actions" of another. After all, if it is possible to translate the inhibited action into an active form, then the "action" associated with it, biologically useful for the animal at the moment, is paralyzed, because the center that provided the latter "according to Pavlov" goes into the "Ukhtomsky" mode of operation. In order for a system of distant interaction to arise on the basis of such an inversion of the inhibitory dominant, one more link is needed - imitation, imitation: the active side of the interaction performs an action that, being "simulated" by the passive side, automatically inhibits the action carried out by the latter:

The combination of these two physiological agents of inhibitory dominant and imitiveness gave a new quality, namely the ability, by provoking imitation, to bring to life an "anti-action" on any action, that is, to inhibit any action in another individual without the help of positive or negative reinforcement and at a distance.

Porshnev called this distant (mediated by an imitative reflex) neurosignal effect of one individual on another "*interdict*". Here is an example of "defensive" interdict in a herd given by Porshnev:

Some leader, trying to give a command, is suddenly forced to interrupt it: the members of the herd disrupt this act by distantly causing him to, say, scratching his head or yawning, or falling asleep, or some other reaction, which in it is irresistibly provoked (like an inversion of the inhibitory dominant) by the law of imitation.

With this example, Porshnev illustrates the necessary conditions for the appearance of interdict. It appears precisely when a human ancestor with a highly developed imitative reflex, due to the changing ecological environment, more and more often had to accumulate in more and more numerous and random groups, where such a reflex not only became dangerous - its irresistible force was already

threatening a "biological catastrophe ". Interdicting, overcoming the irresistible (otherwise) power of imitation, precisely prevents this threat.

Thus, imitation plays a double role in the development of interdict. On the one hand, a developed imitative reflex provides a channel for the transmission of the interdictive signal itself. On the other hand, the same developed imitative reflex turns interdictive signaling into a necessary condition for the survival of this species.

Interdict - writes Porshnev - "*constitutes the highest form of inhibition in the activity of the central nervous system of vertebrates .* "

Analysis of the available data on ecological niches in which at different stages the ancestor of man had to "fight for existence", on the evolution of his brain, on unprecedented close relations with a huge number of other animals leads Porshnev to a double conclusion:

1. the human ancestor had all the anatomical and physiological prerequisites for mastering interdict;
2. without mastering such tools, the human ancestor was doomed to extinction.

Having "discovered" for himself interdict as a means of signaling influence on his own kind, the human ancestor immediately began to spread this practice in relation to all other animals. Porshnev's research led him to the conclusion that the human ancestor "practiced" interdicting on the widest scale, in relation to a variety of mammals, predators and herbivores - and even birds.

The mastery of interdict allowed the human ancestor to occupy a completely unique ecological niche, to build symbiotic relationships unprecedented before him in the animal world.

## **2. From interdict to suggestion**

A calm and comfortable life, however, did not last forever. Gradually, another ecological crisis has matured (the same one, the way out of which was divergence).

This crisis has so deeply affected the ecological niche of the paleoanthropus that even those almost "extreme" adaptation tools in the animal world that he managed to acquire while going through previous crises did not guarantee him against the inexorably impending extinction threat.

The insurmountable difficulties of life in a crisis once again forced the paleoanthrope to vigorously search for new ways of adaptation that went beyond the previous experience (that is, the paleoanthropus got down to business painfully familiar to the modern Russian "neoanthropus").

And it started when the paleoanthropus, who had thoroughly polished his skill in the field of interdict on other animals, set out to apply this powerful tool to his own kind, to other paleoanthropes. Thus, the circle traversed by the interdict was closed: the interdict, which had arisen inside large clusters of paleoanthropes and adapted for use exclusively in relation to other animals, returned to the internal relations of paleoanthropes with each other. But the task she was solving now was different: to neutralize the action not of the imitative reflex, as at the beginning of the path, but of the reflex that

forbade killing. This led the paleoanthropus to the path of divergence - the "cultivation" of a new species, especially susceptible to interdict.

Life, however, quickly suggested that the upper frontal lobes, which reliably provide compliance to interdict, if one starts to practice interdict already inside the "bigheads" proper, are able to provide such instruments of resistance to it that are fundamentally inaccessible to other animals. Thus, having "brought out" a useful breed for themselves - neoanthropes, paleoanthropes came to a completely unacceptable "side" result for the animal world: they pushed the neoanthropus out of the zoological mode of development into the social one.

The rest is very short. Porshnev reconstructs three stages of development of neurosignal distant interaction: interdict I (on the threshold of divergence, described above), interdict II (the height of divergence, inhibition of interdict I, or "self-defense") and interdict III, or "*suggestion*" (transfer of divergence relations into the world of neoanthropes). Suggestion is already the threshold of proper human speech. "*The full maturity of the suggestion*," writes Porshnev, "*corresponds to the completion of the divergence*." The ratio between these three stages - explains Porshnev - can be conditionally compared with the ratio "*cannot*" - "*can*" - "*must*".

The transition from step to step took place, naturally, not without natural selection from numerous mutations, the scale and diversity of which were provoked by the crisis, and therefore not without a multitude of unstable transitional forms. And only in one of the mutations - neoanthropus, the third stage (suggestion) was securely and forever fixed by this selection. It was shown above that it was not at all the neoanthrope himself who derived the biological benefit from such a fixation. The latter still had to work hard in order to turn the harmful acquisition to his advantage.

The first steps of such development, going beyond the framework of biological evolution, that is, not requiring any changes in the anatomy and physiology of the new animal, was the emergence of "*counter-suggestion*" - an instrument of resistance to suggestion - and "*counter-suggestion*" of an instrument of suppression, overcoming this resistance. In turn, the emergence of a pair of "counter-suggestions, counter-suggestions", on the one hand, pushed the neoanthrope into an endless process of improving the forms of both, and on the other, made it possible and necessary to internalize external interaction into an internal dialogue. But this happened much later ...

The foregoing is only the most cursory overview of Porshnev's studies of the physiology of higher nervous activity. Much, very much had to be omitted, much had to be simplified to the utmost. But this review is enough to show that what Porshnev has done in this science is by no means limited to trifles. He infringed on fundamental things.

How did professional physiology react?

The situation here, as far as I know, is even worse than in anthropology proper. The results of Porshnev's research in the field of physiology did not even try to refute. They were simply ignored. I am not aware of a single response to Porsche analysis from professional physiologists. This is also a form of the "counter-suggestion" described by Porshnev, and the most primitive:

Perhaps the most primary of them in the ascending order is to avoid hearing and seeing one or those who form a suggestion in interindividual communication.

About ten years ago, an elderly Leningrad physiologist in a private conversation explained the situation as follows: modern physiologists only recognize that which is the result of using a microscope, scalpel, chemical analysis, etc. Everything else is "philosophy".

Nevertheless, I would venture to express my confidence that the physiologists' need for "philosophy" in the spirit of Pavlov, Ukhtomsky and Porshnev has not disappeared forever. She will be back.

[The following chapters are omitted, in which, in general, the presentation of the corresponding topics from Porshnev's book "On the Beginning of Human History" is given:

[III. Zoology](#)

[IV. Linguistics](#)

[V. Physiology of higher nervous activity](#)

[VI. Psychological Sciences](#) ]

## **Vii. CULTUROLOGY**

Porshnev's studies, affecting culture, relate mainly to its origin, neurophysiological, zoological, as well as socio-psychological prerequisites for its various manifestations. Therefore, most of the results of Porshnev's research, which could have been carried out by the department of "cultural studies", have actually already been described above, in the previous sections of this article.

Here it is necessary to touch upon several more important topics that have remained outside the scope of our presentation until now.

### **1. Ethics and aesthetics**

In Porsche's analysis of the main ethical question "what is good and what is bad?" I will note three interrelated aspects.

1. On the one hand, this is a study of the origin of the very opposition of "bad" and "good".

It should be clear from the previous exposition that everything that is directly related to the behavior of a paleoanthrope of the times of divergence turns out to be "bad", "ugly" in the final analysis, which at least remotely resembles such behavior; finally, everything that can be interpreted as "complicity" in his dirty deeds, as "connivance" to him, "compromise" with him, etc.

It is characteristic that all sorts of ethical codes are developed in the part "what is bad?" always much more detailed, more detailed, brighter than in the part "what is good?" "Good" is anything that is not "bad". Therefore, although most comparative historical studies on ethics and aesthetics are almost exclusively concerned with the concepts of "good" and "beautiful", from the point of view of Porshnev, on the contrary, the most interesting research would be precisely what was considered "bad" by different peoples in different eras "and" ugly ".



2. On the other hand, this is a study of the very physiological and psychological mechanism of the implementation of the prohibition - the prohibition to do something "bad". Porshnev describes the general "formula" of any prohibition in this way - *"it is impossible, except in the case of ..."* :

All prohibitions that reign in the human world are associated with at least some, even the slightest or rarest exception. A person should not kill a person "except as an enemy in war." Sexual relations are prohibited, "except in marriage", etc. The use of someone else's property is prohibited, "except for donations, treats, transactions", etc. The totality of such examples covers literally the entire human culture. One gets the impression, "Porshnev continues cautiously," that the deeper into primitiveness, the more unambiguous and convex these rare permissions, with the help of which the prohibition itself is psychologically constructed. Something is a "taboo", a "sin" precisely because it is permitted under certain strictly defined conditions. This is prohibition through exclusion. Apparently at the same time, in the observable history of culture, the notions of "taboo", "sin", "inviolable", "sacred" ", etc., little by little lose their generalization in contrast to something that can and should be. specific "not allowed." This is clearly seen in how in Christianity or Islam the classification of "sins" becomes more complicated, not only by content, but also by degree of importance. sins "not only in content, but also in importance. sins "not only in content, but also in importance.

What is the nature of such a specific "construction" of a prohibition?

In answering this question, Porshnev refers, among other things, to the "philosophy of the name" developed by Losev:

Dismembering in the word a number of logical layers or shells, Losev paid special attention to the content of the word, which he called "meon": the word invisibly negatively implies everything that is not included in its own meaning. It is, as it were, the gigantic sphere surrounding him of all other words, other names, and other meanings that he denies. If we translate this abstraction into the language of experience, we can say that the word, in fact, acts as a signal of inhibition of all other actions and representations except for one and only one.

The origin of the specific formula of cultural prohibitions - prohibitions through exclusion - lies in the physiological nature of suggestion. Summarizing the long evolutionary path from interdict to suggestion, Porshnev writes:

But, in the end, there are, on the one hand, such signals that are a stop-signal in relation not to any specific action, but to any one taking place at a given moment (interdict); on the other hand, methods of inhibiting not this activity, but activity in general, develop; the latter is achievable only by reserving some narrow single channel through which activity can and must break through. The latter is already a suggestion.

Having emerged as an instrument of inhibition of everything except one thing, suggestion gave rise to two different social phenomena: the word of human speech, in which "only this is allowed," that is, "should," became dominant, and a cultural norm, in which, on the contrary, the dominant it became "everything else is impossible."

3. Finally, Porshnev specially analyzes the most ancient prohibitions, highlighting three of their most important groups.

To the first group, he refers to the prohibitions to kill one's own kind, that is, the restriction of the fundamental biological peculiarity of a person formed in the course of divergence, which was already discussed above:

Apparently, the earliest form of this prohibition was the prohibition to eat a person who died not by this or that natural death, but killed by a human hand. The corpse of a person killed by a person is untouchable. It cannot be eaten, as, apparently, was natural among our distant ancestors in relation to the rest of the dead. An analysis of the Paleolithic burials leads to this conclusion.

From the deceased, untouchability extended to a living person. He, apparently, was considered untouchable if, for example, he was coated with red ocher, was in a hut, had pendants on his body. At a certain stage, the right to kill a person is limited to the use of only distant, but not contact weapons; along with this, wars appear, which in primitive society were waged according to very strict rules. However, a person killed according to the rules could already be eaten.

Thus, Porshnev outlines a process of gradually overcoming the "property" of a person to kill their own kind. Elsewhere, he talks about the process of the state's monopolization of the right to kill (this will be discussed in the section **Political Sciences**):

This is not about evaluating - good or bad. After all, you can look at the process of this monopolization as a way of overcoming this "property" by humanity: as a prohibition to kill each other, carried out "through exclusion" - for those narrow situations when this is possible and should (this is the mechanism for the implementation of many prohibitions in the history of culture, in the human psyche).

Porshnev refers to the second group of prohibitions *"prohibitions to take and touch certain objects, to perform certain actions with them. This group of prohibitions is especially closely related to the formation of social property relations,"* which will be discussed in the next section.

Finally, to the third group of prohibitions, Porshnev includes sexual prohibitions, in particular, the most ancient of them is the prohibition of sexual intercourse between mothers and sons, then brothers and sisters. Summing up his analysis of the way of life of the most ancient people, Porshnev writes:

At the dawn of society [...] these prohibitions meant the preferential rights of male aliens. But the resulting conflict between them and the younger men who grew up on the spot was resolved in the form, firstly, of the segregation of the younger ones into a special social group, separated from the older ones by a complex barrier, and secondly, the emergence of exogamy - one of the most important institutions of the emerging human society.

As mentioned above, the system of the "shuffling herd" presupposes a continuous renewal of its composition, during which new male aliens appear from time to time, adjoining this "herd", and after a while they leave it again.

## 2. Religion

From the results of Porshnev's research concerning such a cultural phenomenon as religion, I will briefly dwell on only two.

- First, it is the early history of religious beliefs, the origins of the concept of "good" and "bad" deities. Porshnev's analysis differs significantly from the generally accepted views, both religious and secular.

For Porshnev, human culture is born in the era of divergence. In a number of special studies, he convincingly showed that the images of deities, proto-gods, various types of "evil spirits" are a reflection of the paleoanthropus, with whom a person had to interact for a long time, as well as a reflection of the specific features of this very interaction. And the more ancient these images are, the more literal physical features and behavioral features of a real "living" paleoanthrope are in them.

- Secondly, it is an analysis of the development and place in society of religion as an institution, as a "church". Porshnev's research shows the closest connection of this institution, which, according to Marxist terminology, belongs primarily to the superstructure, with the class struggle. Below in the section **Political Sciences**, this will be discussed in more detail. Here I will only mention that, from the point of view of the development of the phenomenon of suggestion, the church during the period of greatest power (in a feudal society) was one of the two (along with the state) key instruments of "institutional" counter-suggestion, overcoming resistance (counter-suggestion) to the word of the ruling classes (that is their suggestions).

## 3. Primitive economic culture

Taking into account what was said above about the peculiarities of the relationship between neoanthropes and paleoanthropes in the era of divergence, it is clear that Porshnev strongly refuted the widespread prejudice about the almost "bourgeois" behavior of primitive man:

According to this current concept, the economic psychology of any person can be reduced to the postulate of striving for the maximum possible appropriation. The lower limit of alienation (goods or labor), psychologically acceptable in this case, is alienation for equal compensation. [...] Indeed, under capitalism, behavior opposite to this postulate cannot be anything other than an appendage. But even under feudalism, as can be seen from the sources, economic psychology contained much more than this reverse principle: a significant number of medieval legal and legislative acts prohibit or restrict gratuitous donation, offering, donation of immovable and movable property. The further into the depths of centuries and millennia, the more pronounced this impulse.

In the primitive economic culture, Porshnev states the absolute dominance of this very impulse:

Mutual alienation of the benefits of life obtained from the natural environment was an imperative of the life of primitive people, which is even difficult for us to imagine, because it does not correspond to either the norms of animal behavior, or the principles of material interest of the individual, the principles of appropriation prevailing in modern and recent history. "Giving" was the norm of the relationship. "“ Those were antibiological attitudes

and norms of giving, squandering the benefits that instincts and first-signal stimuli would require to consume oneself, maximum - to give to their young or females.

In fact, Porshnev outlines the contours of the science of primitive economics. However, due to the fact that the traces of primitive economic culture that have survived in our time relate more to culture as such, this topic is classified under the "cultural studies" section:

The norm of economic behavior of each individual [...] consisted precisely in the all-round "squandering" of the fruits of labor: the collectivism of the primitive economy consisted not in the arrangement of hunters during a round-up, not in the rules for dividing hunting prey, etc., but in the maximum treats and gifts each other. [...] Giving, treating, giving is the main form of product movement in archaic societies.

On the contrary, the development of human society consisted in the creation of an increasingly complex system of restrictions for this "form of product movement", in the "negation" of the indicated starting point:

At the dawn of history, only obstacles of a clan, tribal and ethnocultural nature stopped "waste" within the local framework and thereby did not allow the ruin of this primitive community or group of people. This means that the fragmentation of primitive mankind into a huge number of communities or communities (and of different levels and intersecting), standing to each other in one way or another in opposition "we - they", was an objective economic necessity.

As can be clearly seen from the above excerpt, Porshnev's analysis constantly addresses the problems that lie at the junction, at the intersection of various sciences, in this case, at least four - history, economics, social psychology and cultural studies. Below, in the section on **Economic Science**, it will be shown that, according to Porshnev, the creation of the described system of primitive restrictions on mutual "waste" means the formation of primitive property relations.

The perception of Porshnev's creative heritage in cultural studies is a very unusual phenomenon.

On the one hand, it so happened that culturology today is increasingly beginning to claim the role of the very "synthetic science of a social person or human society", which Porshnev dreamed of building. And the popularity of his name among cultural scientists is almost the highest in the sciences in general. In any case, in Russia.

On the other hand, modern culturology absolutely does not correspond to Porsche's criteria of "synthetic science about a social person or human society." Elements of genetic analysis of cultural phenomena, the most important for Porshnev, are extremely rare here. Therefore, it is not surprising that, unlike the *name of Porshnev*, his real views in cultural studies are completely unpopular. Within the framework of this science, not only is Porshnev's creative heritage not being developed, research is not being carried out on the basis of its scientific paradigm, but these latter, strictly speaking, are not even very well known there.

[The following chapters are omitted:

#### [VIII. Economic Sciences](#)

[IX. Sociology](#)

[X. Political Sciences](#)

[XI. Philosophy of history as social philosophy \]](#)

## **XII. THE FATE OF A HERITAGE: INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION**

You can do something with all this gigantic legacy. True, so far the daredevil has not been found ...

Why?

He was often reproached for the fact that he proceeds not from fact, but from speculative constructions. I remember that on this issue (where to start?) There was a long, one might say, endless discussion.

The reason was another attempt to undermine the monopoly of the ideological superstructure. Courageous people decided to question one of Marx's statements about the movement from the abstract to the concrete as the only scientific method. In contrast to Marx, a second, supposedly equally legitimate path was put forward: from the concrete to the abstract. However, back in 1960, the eminent Soviet philosopher E. Ilyenkov proved that at the starting point a researcher always has an abstract scheme in his head, although he may not be aware of it, applying it to the "fact" as something self-evident, "obvious." Therefore, if you use the terms in a strict meaning and avoid ambiguity, the only alternative to moving from the abstract to the concrete can only be the movement from the abstract to the abstract.

Of course, Porshnev, to a much greater extent, did not seek the facts himself, but used the facts collected by other scientists. But he discovered such their significance and such their connections with each other that the "discoverer" of these facts himself could not and did not want to see. Thanks to this, he was able to fill in the "dead zones" lying at the intersection of various sciences. This issue has been discussed above in several sections.

On the other hand, Porshnev himself discovered many facts. Moreover, he formulated a general methodology to clearly separate "fact" from its "interpretation":

On the scientist's table is a huge pile of messages from people about a phenomenon unknown to him. [...] This stack of messages proves at least one fact, namely that such a stack of messages exists, and we would not be foolish if we subject this fact to research. After all, perhaps this first observed fact will help at least to guess the reason for the lack of other facts, and thereby find a way to them.

The most dangerous thing for a scientist, according to Porshnev, is to immediately start rejecting: the least reliable ones are to be thrown away, leaving only the minimum of the most reliable ones for analysis:

The starting point should be distrust of the entire stack of messages as a whole, without the slightest privileges and concessions. This is the only way a scientist has the right to start his reasoning: maybe everything told to us by different people about the relict hominoid does not correspond to the truth. Only with this assumption will a scientist be able to objectively

consider an indisputable fact - a stack of messages. Since everything about her is wrong, how can you explain her appearance? What is it and how did it arise?

Obviously, what has been said applies not only to the facts about the relict hominoid.

Let's approach the problem from the other side.

For any "social scientist", and even more so for such a "universalist" as Porshnev, one fundamental difference between the social sciences and the natural is of key importance. If a physicist or chemist cannot explain why his ingenious discovery is rejected by society, then the fact of such misunderstanding does not call into question his professional competence. If a social scientist does not understand, then he is a bad social scientist, for the question of the mechanisms of society (population, scientific and political elite, etc.) receptivity to various innovations is directly included in the subject of his science.

Did Porshnev understand the "implementation" problem? Certainly.

After all, it was he and no one else who investigated the mechanisms of protection against suggestion (counter-suggestion) and the ways to break such protection (counter-suggestion). He, as a high-class professional, could not help but see what forms of counter-suggestion are used to defend against his arguments, but he did not find suitable forms of counter-suggestion. The situation is somewhat similar to Z. Freud, who in every objection to the results of his research found one of the "complexes" he studied. In the same way, Porshnev clearly saw in the reaction to the presentation of the results of his research the methods of defense against the influence of words, analyzed by him.

Why did he not find suitable forms of counter-suggestion?

Of course, a person is not omnipotent, and even in the most intellectually developed community, the possibility of relapses of the most primitive forms of counter-suggestion, which turns out to be especially effective against those who cannot afford to descend to the same level, is never completely turned off.

However, it seems that this is not the only point, and even mainly - not this. I will hypothesize that it was precisely in assessing the appropriate forms of counter-counter-suggestion that Porshnev was seriously mistaken.

Porshnev, of course, suffered, so to speak, from the occupational disease of any "diachronic universalist" - an overestimation of the progressiveness level of the stage of development in which he himself lived, obvious to most contemporaries. This is precisely what Hegel was justly accused of.

It is safe to assume that Porshnev guessed about the threat posed by this disease for him personally. I will cite a very characteristic of his reasoning about Hegel:

Nowhere do we find in Hegel a direct statement that the Prussian monarchy in its real state of that time is already an achieved ideal [...]. Subjectively, Hegel painted, rather, the utopia of the further evolution of the Prussian state, presenting his demands and promissory notes to him, although accompanied by countless praises and ceremonial bows.

The same can be said about Porshnev himself. He both drew the "utopia of the further development" of the USSR (and the "socialist camp" as a whole), and "presented him with his demands and promissory notes", avoiding either "praises" or "ceremonial bows". However, even taking into account all this (we will reproduce the Porshnev logic of the analysis of the "main sociological problem"), we will have to state that there remains too much that he wrote about the surrounding socialist reality, undoubtedly sincerely, but which is incomparably smaller in the power of analysis than his own studies of other formations ...

Of course, not quite adequate assessments of the social system of the USSR caused by such a "disease" do not diminish its merits in the study of the rest of history, these assessments constitute an immeasurably small part of his creative heritage. However, it was they who prevented Porshnev from building a dialogue with colleagues.

He often resorted to argumentation that did not achieve the goal, was not and could not be heard by his contemporaries: he saw in them not the people they really were. One example related to dialogue with colleagues on the history of feudalism.

By the beginning of the 1950s (if not earlier), for the majority of serious historians, glaring contradictions between the canonical (and frozen, in terms of concrete content) formulas of "Marxism-Leninism" and a gigantic array of new, reliably established empirical facts accumulated by historians became obvious during the years of Soviet power. Every scientist faces a fatal fork.

The majority followed the path of ritual oaths of fidelity to canonical formulas in the "prefaces" and "introductions", decisively refusing to actually use them as any important methodological tools. Porshnev, one of the few, "went the other way": he undertook a comprehensive and thorough revision of the very content of the "empty" formulas. It is clear that scientists following these two different paths could not avoid a rapid scattering up to a complete misunderstanding of each other.

However, then Porshnev did not lose hope, trying to explain that the notorious "formulas" are applicable not only for ritual purposes:

The authors of a number of textbooks and works on the feudal era, [...] even if they admit in words the function of suppressing and curbing the peasantry as the essence of the feudal state, then leave this "essence" aside, without resorting to it to explain even the most significant aspects and changes in the feudal states (for example, centralization), explaining them by some other, non-main, functions of the state. But what kind of "essence" is this, since it cannot explain anything significant in the history of the feudal state?

From the above words, it is clear that Porshnev used an argument that could only cause the opposite effect, namely, an extremely negative emotional reaction, the meaning of which he, as a specialist in social psychology, was obliged to understand. Indeed, Porshnev actually catches them in an attempt to break through "from the flank" the monopoly of the ideological superstructure. He reproaches them exactly what, in his own analysis of similar processes in feudal society, he attached extremely important and undoubtedly progressive significance! Could such arguments achieve the goals that Porshnev was striving for?

A second example is the episode described above in the **Zoology** section with the reaction of the scientific community to the hidden accusation of idealism on anthropologists. In fact, Porshnev did not take into account that the logic of the evolution of a monopoly ideological superstructure and the logic of scientific knowledge, which determines the evolution of the theoretical concept underlying this superstructure, may directly contradict each other.

However, I would like to emphasize that the value of Porshnev's analysis of the medieval ideological superstructure, which makes it possible to understand the essence of any totalitarian ideological superstructure, undoubtedly outweighs his own, not quite adequate, perception of such a superstructure in Soviet society, and of this society as a whole.

And the last thing.

After all that has been said, one important question remains. Is it possible, in general, in accordance with the Porshnev methodology and in accordance with the results of his research, to correct the formation theory precisely in that part that has remained the most vulnerable to criticism due to the above-mentioned Porshnev's occupational illness? So that it would correspond to all the facts of the last decades of human development, including the events of the last ten years?

After all, the point here is not only to explain, say, the collapse of a number of communist regimes, but also to show the unconditional progressiveness within the framework of the "formation process" of these events.

The answer is yes, there is such a possibility. However, the presentation of the corresponding hypotheses, to the development of which the author of these lines also had a hand, is already completely at odds with the tasks of this review.

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