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THE 18TH AND 19TH-CENTURY FRENCH THINKERS ON CIVILIZATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

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Summary. *The future development of both global and local civilizations is based on our knowledge of the past and our involvement in the present. It largely depends on rethinking the ideas of the past and reintegrating their productive elements into our worldview. The ideas of Turgot, Condorcet, Comte, Durkheim interpreted from the standpoint of today can become the missing pieces of the puzzle, the name of which is the civilization paradigm. The paper aims to explore the ideas of the famous 18th – 19th century French thinkers on civilization. The authors used cultural-historical and integrative approaches.*

Key words: *civilization, world history, progress, culture, state, nation.*

Nowadays, there are many approaches to the problem of globalization. Some theorists consider it as an objective and natural process, while others believe that it occurs under the influence of the certain subjects of social interaction. Globalization may be seen as the interaction of civilizations. Thus, civilization becomes one of the categories to explain and understand the world. It is impossible to give the only one definition of the notion “civilization”. Civilization is often understood as a set of material and spiritual values that expresses a certain level of historical development of any given society. The notion “civilization” was introduced to denote the certain qualitative characteristic of society, the level of its development. The term “civilization” is believed to be coined in the middle of the 18th century in the book “L’ami des hommes, ou Traité de la population” authored by Victor Riqueti de

Mirabeau. In England, one of the first concepts of “civilization” was introduced into science by Adam Ferguson in the theoretical periodization of the world history. According to Ferguson, civilization as a stage of social development is characterized by the separation of society from nature and the emergence of contradictions between natural and artificial factors of society. Thus, society becomes a holistic system with stable mechanisms of self-reproduction, transmission of social experience and spiritual traditions.

In the second half of the 18th century and throughout the 19th century, the theory of civilizations was actively developed by the Western European historians, philosophers, and sociologists. Bourgeois democratic revolutions, Napoleonic wars, and the formation of the national states triggered scientific interest in exploring the principles and laws of

social-historical development of humanity, and three powerful civilizational schools – French, English, and German – were established. One of the most influential schools was the French school.

Analysis of the studies and publications. The contradictions between the various paradigms of civilization and the related problems of the world development as well as the interaction of civilizations are the subject of many sciences. Today, there are virtually no branches of humanities in which, one way or another, these problems would not be considered. Some provisions were developed in economic and political theory, sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, anthropology, and psychology. G. Faccarello [9], J. Powell [14], E. W. Younkins [21]; M. Albertone [1], V. Guillin [11], J. K. Ingram [12]; S. Lukes [13] contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon of civilization from the standpoint of the prominent French thinkers. By the end of the 20th century and in the 21st century, the meaning of civilization and the interaction of civilizations has become an independent direction of philosophical thought [5; 6; 15].

The purpose of the study. The paper aims to explore the ideas of the famous 18th – 19th century French thinkers on civilization. The authors used cultural-historical and integrative approaches.

Methodology. The authors used cultural-historical and integrative approaches.

Research results and their discussion. The French school of civilization was distinguished by the variety of views. Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727–1781) was a prominent social philosopher and political economist who is considered to be a symbol of Enlightenment. According to Turgot, there is a certain periodicity when the progressive movement of science and art is accelerating and then decaying. It can be seen in the rise and fall of empires,

different forms of government. He believes that progress, although inevitable, is accompanied by decline due to events and revolutions that interrupt it, so it varies in different nations. The laws of history are formed entirely by humans, and the source of human development is contradictions. This is an optimistic view of the course of history and the role of crises and revolutions in it [10]. “Turgot saw human progress as rooted in human faculties, motivations, will, and fixed natural law. He viewed progress as a basic law of the universe that did not require divine intervention – man progresses under his own power. Turgot’s ideas of world history and progress lay far outside and beyond Biblical teachings. In essence, Turgot discerned that man must learn to adjust and to adapt to the natural laws of the universe. The starting point for the human mind is nature as it is. Man’s problem then is to discover the fundamental principles that underpin the workings of the world. To do this involves the study of the processes of causation through which the past causes the present and the past and present together cause the future. All ages are linked by a series of causes and effects which connects the present state of the world with all those states that have come before it. For Turgot, progress was the inevitable consequence of historical development and, at the same time, the creation of the human will acting with an understanding of the past” [21].

The idea of a natural change of civilizations in the history of humankind was first presented by the famous French philosopher and mathematician Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794) in his book “Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind” written in 1794 in prison while awaiting execution [4]. He singled out ten periods in the history of humankind, each of which differed in a special kind of civilization: the first political institutions created by primitive hunters and fishermen of the

tribes; separation of cities and villages, accumulation of wealth, the emergence of states, social inequality and the arbitrariness of state power give rise to the need for great revolutions, without which the progress of civilization stops at a low level; the dominance of the Greek culture, which moved to a new level of philosophy and science; the split of the natural sciences and philosophy, the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire, which leads to the decline of civilization; the revival of science by the Arabs; the Renaissance in Italy, the intensification of spiritual life, the invention of printing; the great geographical discoveries, powerful economic development, the Reformation and religious wars; the creation of the French Republic as a consequence of all the previous natural progress of civilization, the revolution in France, which reveals the essence of civilization; future period when inequality between peoples will disappear, when the majority will approach the level of the most educated civilizations, when property inequality will be allowed only to the extent that contributes to the progress of civilization, when intellectual, moral, and physical abilities will be harmoniously developed.

Being the author of the project of "progressist reforms", Condorcet paid much attention to education, and his ideas on public education were paramount. According to his views, "progress is only possible on the term of freedom of peoples, participation of great personalities in history and foundation of a republic as the form of political life. In this case the system of public education becomes extremely significant. Long lasting progress would hardly have been possible if scientific research had been serving only the interests of a narrow professional circle. Scientific and cultural progress does not cause people's unhappiness in itself ..., human good... depends directly on availability of new knowledge" [20, p. 4].

This is the idea of the periodic change of the world civilizations and the revolutions that accompany this change. A French-Swiss political propagandist and conversationalist **Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, Baronne (baroness) de Staël-Holstein**, byname **Madame de Staël** (1766–1817) considered civilization as the meaning of history. She used such concepts as "world" and "global (universal)" civilization [17; 18].

In the 19th century, the French thinkers had continued to actively develop the theory of civilizations. A French political, economic and socialist theorist Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) put forward the concept of human development from barbarism to civilization through 12 stages of historical progress; each of them is associated with a certain level of economic and social development, change of cultural forms and is realized in a certain country – first in Egypt, then in Greece, Rome, and finally in Europe. Every social form corresponds to a certain mental system, every great social revolution coincides with the revolution in philosophy, beliefs, and scientific concepts [16].

The French philosopher and writer who considered to be the father of positivism and sociology Isidore Marie Auguste Francois Xavier Comte (1799–1857) initiated a positivist approach to the theory of civilizations. For Comte, civilization as the spiritual life of society expressed in religion, philosophy, and science was the central phenomenon of the historical process. It was from the laws of civilization that he was going to deduce rational ideas about all other manifestations of the history of society. The concept of civilization appeared central both in the social dynamics and social statics, which describes the conditions of stability, the structure of society [3].

Comte proclaimed the law of three stages, that is, the three stages of the development of civilization – theological, metaphysical, and positive. The main law

of social statics, according to Comte, is the correspondence between the nature of state institutions and the state of civilization, i.e., the customs and ideas of society, the position of science, arts, and crafts. The philosopher considered the development of the spiritual life of society to be the primary source of the dynamics of civilization, while emphasizing the importance of industrial and military activities of citizens. However, he was skeptical of the role of revolutions in the development of civilizations. He envisaged the stage when the state should be replaced by sociocracy – the power of people who express a scientific point of view on the prospects of civilization. Everything that hinders them including the unscientific parliamentary system should be eliminated. Thus, it is simply no room for conflict in society.

“Comte’s thought is resolutely oriented toward the future. The order of time, he said, is not past-present-future, but rather past-future-present. The latter, being only ‘a vague and fleeting span which fills the interval between two immensities of duration, and binds them together [...], can only be properly conceived with the aid of the two extremes which it unites and separates’... Various signs lead one to think that, in the near future, we will witness a better reception of this aspect of Comte’s philosophy” [2].

A French scholar Arsene Dumont (1849–1902) in the book “Dépopulation et Civilization: Étude Démographique” opened a new frontier in the study of the dynamics of local civilizations [7]. Being the proponent of the theory of social capillarity, he showed that the final stage of development of civilizations is associated with depopulation – birth rates declination, population extinction. He came to the conclusion that low fertility is directly related to high intellectual and aesthetic development. According to Dumont’s view, there are three principles of population that are related to the stages of social development:

“1. In the preventive stage, the Malthusian theory of population applies where human beings live like animals. On what they can find, they increase in geometrical progression.

2. In the intermediate stage, Quillard’s principle of population applies. According to this, “Population proportions itself automatically”. In such a society, population increases as food supply increases because population can produce food itself. Here positive checks do not become necessary.

3. In a modern civilized society, Dumont applies his social capillarity principle. In such a society, every individual wants to achieve higher economic and social status. For this, a small family is imperative, because one cannot climb high on the social ladder with the burden of more children on its back” [19].

This impasse in the development of civilization vividly described by Dumont affected the worldview of many scientists. Thus, the idea of civilization has become a symbol of the decline of culture, a symbol of the extinction of nations. The term “civilization” has lost its value meaning and has acquired the character of a scientific concept that embodies a variety of both positive and negative trends in human development.

A well-known French sociologist David Émile Durkheim (1857-1917) added a pessimistic note to the assessment of the development of civilizations. He devoted one of his studies to the connection between the development of civilization and the increase in the number of suicides [8]. According to Durkheim, civilization is a consequence of population growth. Civilization increases population density and the degree of the division of labor among people. But the excessive sophistication of civilization causes anxiety and depression and leads to an increase in a number of suicides. Statistics show that the most developed regions of Europe are leaders in a

number of mental disorders and suicides. However, Durkheim emphasizes the progressive side of the development of civilizations: the division of labor creates the need for communication, new culture, solidarity, and altruism. Durkheim considers the system of cultural values to be the core of the regulatory mechanism of local civilizations. He stresses the uniqueness of the moral norms that cannot be implemented from the outside, because every nation has its own morality, which is determined by the conditions in which it lives. It is therefore impossible to impose another morality on any given civilization, no matter how high and developed it may be, as it leads to disorganization of the civilization. Thus, contemporary society has to reconsider the idea of a global moral and the spread of the Western values all over the world.

Conclusions. The future development of both global and local civilizations is based on our knowledge of the past and our involvement in the present. It largely depends on rethinking the ideas of the past and reintegrating their productive elements into our worldview. The ideas of Turgot, Condorcet, Comte, Durkheim interpreted from the standpoint of today can become the missing pieces of the puzzle, the name of which is the civilization paradigm.

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ФРАНЦУЗЬКІ МИСЛИТЕЛІ 18–19 СТОЛІТЬ ПРО ЦИВІЛІЗАЦІЇ: КОРОТКИЙ ОГЛЯД

Кичкирук Т. В. , Салата Г. В.

Анотація. Майбутній розвиток як глобальної, так і локальних цивілізацій базується на наших знаннях про минуле та нашої причетності до сьогодення. Він багато в чому залежить від переосмислення ідей минулого та реінтеграції продуктивних елементів у сучасний світогляд. Ідеї Тюрго, Кондорсе, Конта, Дюркгейма, інтерпретовані з позиції сучасності, можуть виявитися відсутніми частинами пазлу, ім'я якому – цивілізаційна парадигма. Стаття має на меті дослідити цивілізаційні ідеї відомих французьких мислителів 18 – 19 століть. Автори використовували культурно-історичний та інтегративний підходи.

Ключові слова: цивілізація, світова історія, прогрес, культура, держава, нація.