

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT ANDRUS PARK

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The history that Andrus Park started to study in Tartu was a bit strange indeed. To put aside some evidently unscientific quasi-historical disciplines and sciences themselves (like Scientific Communism or the History of the CPSU) there was still a sort of a paradox there. From the formal point of view history as a scholarly discipline seemed to have achieved its methodological completeness under the "materialistic" concept of the historical development; on the other hand: individual subjects taught by individual professors often needed their own theories and explanations for their facts and not inevitably the ones that did fit into the framework of the Marxist social dogmatics. Thus Andrus Park once told me that the studies in the agricultural rent in pre-capitalist Estonia (I do not remember any more why) fitted better into Adam Smith's "triangle" ( $\text{price} = \text{wages} + \text{profits} + \text{rent}$ ) than into Marxist simplifications towards the labour theory of value.

Or, a more contemporary event – the establishment of Salvadore Allende's regime in Chile that did not satisfy the rules of the class-struggle invented by Lenin. Well, Andrus Park was happy not only to see the end of Allendism but also to obtain enough information to justify the sacrifices made to bring this new brand of Communism down.

So the very question itself: why do the things in the modern world happen as they do? – the most elementary and the most common one to any scientific mind – obtained a new value and meaning for a social philosopher in the former USSR. What I want to say here is not that the seeking for explanations was something new in itself but that the challenging of the explanations given automatically by the official doctrine was something unusual in the social and scientific context where Andrus Park had to start his academic life. To ask certain things was not within the realm of a paradigm (in the Kuhn's sense) at that time.

I do not want to add heroism to the things that were done or thoughts that were thought and that basically were not heroic at all. There is no need for that. What I want to point at though was that it had to be a scholar of Andrus Park's talent and magnitude to realize intellectually that a turning point was nearing where the facts of life would overthrow the paradigm; the paradigm first and its supporters next.

Among all the problems Andrus Park tried to formulate, analyse, and work upon there was one that remained unchanged and not even finally formulated but the one that he had discovered. I mean the problem that in its simplified form may be put in the following words: how deep will be the "cut" into (or better: how "high" will be the reach of) the paradigm of a social being and his reflections (in the form of sociology, history, social and general philosophy) that is going to result from the forthcoming events. In other words – for Andrus Park, who basically remained conservative at the bottom of his heart, a believer in the intellectual roots and traditions of the modern occidental philosophy – it was a question of the stability of values, institutions, and knowledge that would remain with people whatever disasters or revolutionary gains would be obtained by the mankind on this turn of its history. Emotionally it was really hard for us to believe that all that had been done by the generations of Soviet scholars had been wasted completely or, on the other hand, that all that had been contributed to the humanity by the Western world would have to remain so vulnerable vis-a-vis some future Lenins or Allendes to come.

What Andrus Park saw around him since the early eighties was a gradually accelerating chain of events that finally ended in the collapse of the USSR and the whole system of the 20th century "socialism". What has happened since and still continues to happen remains a mystery for most of us. Even the best politicians, political thinkers, and sociologists are not able to make any reasonable, long-standing predictions or generalizations of the current events. The downfall of Yeltsin, stabilization of rouble, restructuring of NATO, liberalization of the European trade regime, etc. are topics that have been discussed for many years and events that still have not happened, to give just a few examples. And that is what was Andrus' lifelong problem he still tried to look into till his very last days: his firm belief that there must be some system, some structure in everything that goes on just now in the world turned mad ... The time given to him to see that structure was too short.