

## **Abstract**

This paper discusses the understanding of history in the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Karl Marx as representatives of the idealistic and materialistic ways of this understanding. It will show that both approaches, in essence, have Hegel's dialectic as their first principle. Emerson, like Hegel, considered that the driving force of history is the World Soul (the World Reason), guiding and ensuring the development of mankind and the continuity of historical eras. Marx proposed a different, materialistic, but also dialectical interpretation of the course of history, treating society as a kind of integrity capable of self-development, explaining the change of formations in society by the fact that productive forces develop, violating the correspondence between themselves and the production relations, which implies the need to change these relations, and, behind them, others, "superstructure" relations, that is, the whole society. In frames of the research, their representations about the essence of life, the being of the individual and the social community and freedom are also considered. Emerson's concept of 'self-reliance' and Marx's concept of alienation, in particular, are discussed. The contrast and meeting points of these two philosophers' positions are analyzed. Similarities and differences in the views of Emerson and Marx on the ideal society and ways to achieve it are noted and analyzed.