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# **Dialogue among Civilizations**

**Russian Philosophical Studies, IV**

Edited by  
*Nur Kirabaev*  
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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## INTRODUCTION

This work is dedicated to the most fruitful and effective cooperation with the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP). This began in 1997, when we first met the Council at an international scholarly conference in Lviv (Ukraine). The conference was arranged by the RVP with the support of the Soros Foundation and devoted to the problem of building civil societies in East European countries. During the conference it became clear that the approach of the RVP to certain problems of history of philosophy and interaction between cultures in the contemporary world had many parallels in our own approach. We had been working on the problematic of the “Dialogue of Civilizations: East–West” and had arranged three international conferences (1992, 1995, 1997) connected with these issues. The Council enthusiastically joined our projects and took an active part in the four succeeding conferences, held in Moscow (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005) as Co-Chair of the Organizing Committee and member of the Scholarly Committee. In addition, a few research projects were carried out with the active participation of the RVP. Our scholars joined in a number of extended 10-week seminars and two monographs were published in English in the U.S.A., namely:

- *Islamic and Christian Cultures: Conflict or Dialogue; Bulgarian Philosophical Studies, III. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change*, v.21.–Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001; and

- *Values of Islamic Culture and the Experience of History; Russian Philosophical Studies, 1*. Edited by Nur Kirabaev and Yuriy Pochta.–Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002.

The articles included in the present volume, *Dialogue among Civilizations, Russian Philosophical Studies, IV*, also stemmed from the cooperation between the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia.

Part I, “Rethinking the Philosophical and Political Foundations in post-Soviet Russia,” deals with the general problematic of contemporary Russian philosophy; Part 2 deals with Russian philosophy and its influence on the “Russian idea” and the Eurasian doctrine; Part 3 concentrates on myth and logos in various civilizational contexts.

Chapter I, “Philosophy at the Dawn of the New Millennium,” by Nur Kirabaev, Anatoly Semushkin and Valery Gubin, offers an evaluation of the present status of philosophy, identifies the symptoms and the main characteristics of losing its disciplinary borders, and underscores the preconditions and reasons leading to a devaluation of traditional

philosophical values. The authors suggest possible ways for rehabilitating the status and prestige of philosophy along with the restoration of its spiritual and professional identity.

Chapter II by Pyotr Grechko, “Contemporaneity: Socio-Historical Being,” claims that the deeply historical nature of all social life is self-evident, while historicity primarily means changes and differences. Therefore it is important to identify differences, or determine a time-scale in which they occur. Most likely it will be necessary to start from contemporaneity which stands at the top of these differences and which alone can provide the full, panoramic and dynamic outlook of history. The context of contemporaneity always sets the “pre-conceptions” of nature, society and human being. As the author of the article insists, it is necessary to emphasize that by contemporaneity here we mean not only living in the present, but also existing at the advanced level of producing progress, keeping pace with the present age and being on the cutting edge of historical time.

Chapter III, “Culture and Global Communication,” by Vladimir Mironov, attempts to analyze the most powerful and all-embracing phenomenon of contemporary culture regulating its structural and directional components in the sense of function and essence, namely the phenomenon of global communication. The author also reflects on the possible standards for creative work and the integrative processes within the communicative space of modern society, and analyzes the consequences of global communication in terms of gains and losses.

Chapter IV, by Dmitry N. Baryshnikov, “Ideological Trends in Contemporary World Politics,” shows how ideology did not end with the fall of either fascism or communism. Rather it lives on in the neo-conservative dynamics in Washington as well as in Russia, but now begins to take on a new set of postmodern characteristics such as weakness in theoretical bases and an anti-globalist rhetoric combined with new strengths in communications.

Chapter V, “‘War on Terror,’ Postcommunist Transformation and Globalization,” by Piotr Dutkiewicz, moves the discussion to terrorism in the conviction that the modern era and unilateral policies are already past and that it is increasingly recognized that a new policy is needed.

Chapter VI, by Vladimir A. Gutorov, “Political Culture and Political Power in the Epoch of Globalization,” focuses on two issues: the effect of the transformation of political power on political theory and whether such theory requires an ethical component.

Part II. “Russian Philosophy: Diversity in Unity”.

Chapter VII, by Mikhail Maslin, “Rethinking Russia,” addresses the main trends and problems in the development of historico-philosophical studies on Russia – particularly in the post-Soviet period. He presents a concise historico-philosophical outline of the religious philosophy at the

basis of the “Russian idea” from its origins in the mid eleventh century to the twentieth century.

Chapter VIII, “‘The Russian Idea’: In Search of National Identity,” by Viacheslav Serbinenko, demonstrates how the numerous reflections on the destiny of Russia, which occupied an important place in nineteenth-century Russian thought, were essentially philosophical in nature. The decisive question was not focused on the specific historical fate of Russia and the West, nor on the relations between the two. The “slavophiles” and the “westernisers” debated the reality of the Christian path in history, arguing over how far the European peoples and Russia were going down this road, and whether it was at all attainable. V. Soloviev and F. Dostoevsky posed an undoubtedly metaphysical but nevertheless concrete question to Russia and to the West. Could nations and states that have declared themselves Christian disregard such declared religious and moral principles in their historical actions. Even more with nationalist ideologies that are absolutely incompatible with the Christian faith can they justify politics that can lead to the ‘international destruction of humanity’? Having developed their own metaphysics of the ‘Russian idea’, our thinkers consider national unity to be unattainable without profound understanding and respect for other traditions and psychological experiences.

Chapter IX, by Sergei Nizhnikov, “Florovsky as a Philosopher of Eurasian Spirituality,” claims that the classical Eurasianist doctrine came to an end without having been transformed into a lasting and theoretically sound system of thought. This was predetermined both by a version of the genealogical sources and by the Eurasianists’ attempts to synthesize scholarly-philosophic positions with purely ideological vectors. There were limitations that ensued from the way the movement was organized. The philosophical problems – insoluble under the Eurasian doctrine – were most deeply defined by the Russian orthodox thinkers, G. Florovsky and V.V. Zen’kovsky. Nizhnikov’s chapter is devoted to the analysis of their views concerning the classics of Eurasian doctrine. While Florovsky defended the principle of spirit, instead of territory (“local development” and “blood soil movement”), Zen’kovsky criticized the anti-western position of Eurasianists who “could not understand the universal character of the Christian ideal”.

Chapter X, “Limits of Eurasian Metaphysics,” by Anatoly Semoushkin, analyzes and evaluates the Eurasianists’ claims to a philosophical stature for their speculative doctrine. The author considers the specificity of the Eurasianists’ philosophical ideas in the context of their historiosophic, geopolitical and cultural projects, pointing out the dominant function of ideology in Eurasianism which limits the legitimacy of their philosophic claims.

Chapter XI, by Vasiliy Vanchougov, “Eurasianist Movement and Philosophy,” reflects on the nature of the philosophical component of the classical Eurasianist complex of ideas (1930-1940). The author builds his argument on the graphic demonstration and analysis of the juxtaposed texts

of the leading Eurasianists and their opponents (P.Savitsky, P.Bitsilli, G.V.Florovsky, N.P.Berdyayev, N.S.Troubetskoy, L.Karsavin, etc.).

Chapter XII, by Madina Tlostanova, “Imperial Difference and Russia as a Subaltern Empire of Modernity,” revolves around the idea of Russia as a quasi-western subaltern empire, marked with imperial difference from the West and exercising various forms of colonial difference with its internal others. “Trans-imperial” and “trans-colonial” relations can be the ground for a mutually productive dialogue between the Russian humanities and critical scholars of cultural globalization. Russia remains even today a multiethnic and multi-confessional country where the internal problems of interpreting ethnic, religious and linguistic otherness – as well as the multiplicity of existing models of relations with internal colonies – have not yet been properly addressed. The formation of an alternative epistemic position that can take into account the ambivalent role of Russia in modernity is oriented to the development of “trans-perspectives” in scholarly thinking. Russian scholars in the humanities and social sciences and border theorists in various parts of the world face the need to re-think the project of modernity, eurocentrism and imperial/colonial differences. Connections between these scholars and theorists should be established and their work should be based on dialogue. The most promising way to develop global intellectual production in the future entails two tasks: to critique Euro-American epistemology in the social sciences and the humanities and to generate knowledge at the border – for this is where people meet.

Chapter XIII, “‘Orientalization’ of Marxism in Revolutionary Russia,” by Yuriy Pochta, shows that in the conditions of the present vast social renewal of Russia it is important to address the experience of the previous epoch-making stage of its history. This means looking at how, in the first third of the 20th century, the Russian Marxists treated the role of Russia in world history and how they defined its place between the East and the West. Here, the former is understood primarily as the Muslim East, referring to both foreign Muslim societies and the Muslim population of Russia itself. Contacts with this have for many centuries – and in many respects – determined the destiny of Russia. The dramatic experience of Soviet history can enable us to draw lessons for the present, when Russia is once again on the quest for its place in the world.

Part III. “Myth and Logos in Various Civilizational Contexts”.

Chapter XIV, by Viacheslav Naydysh, tackles the phenomenon of quasi-scientific myth creation in “Mystery as a Form of Culture”. He demonstrates that the quasi-scientific myth-creation is formed at the interface of folklore, a scientific picture of the world and ordinary consciousness. It is directed not so much to the knowledge of the world as to the proliferation of ways to experience the world. This means that the quasi-scientific myth of creation belongs to the value-aesthetic sphere of subjectivity rather than to the cognitive sphere.



Chapter XV, by Natalia Petyaksheva, “The Quest for Original Logos: the Latin American Perspective,” demonstrates that the Latin American “philosophy of liberation” constitutes a new stage in the development of philosophical thought in Latin America. It claims that it expresses a conceptual and systematic expression of an original logos. In a quarter of a century “the philosophy of liberation” gained many followers outside the continent – both in Europe (Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy, England) and in the USA. The growing participation of its supporters in active dialogue with the contemporary Western-European thought indicates that polyphonic discourse is gradually becoming a regular feature of the modern historical and philosophical process.

Chapter XVI, “Islam as an Issue in Cross-Cultural Interaction Between East and West,” by Nur Kirabaev, searches for the tools to understand world development and its history. Professor Kirabaev suggests here that the history of Muslim civilization points to an oscillating spiral path – and even to asynchronism.

Chapter XVII, “Oswald Spengler’s Political Grounds for Mystification of Islam and Christianity,” by Yuriy Pochta, examines the position of Spengler in *Decline of the West*. Spengler rejected the view that posited common progress and human unity, and advanced a plurality of independently existing civilizations which move in a circle. These are marked by geo-politics and an aspiration to dominate the world.

All in all, the pieces assembled in this book respond to the complex set of preoccupations connected not only with rethinking philosophy as a discipline on a global scale, but also with its re-mapping and being situated in the new geo-cultural world order. In particular, this enables reconceptualization of the relations of Russia, the West and the East as epistemic concepts and as cultural and political realities. This process of remapping philosophy, within which we submit the present volume, can give philosophy a new and creative impetus in the twenty-first century.

*Nur S. Kirabaev*

*Yuriy M. Pochta*



**PART I**

**RETHINKING THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND  
POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS IN  
POST-SOVIET RUSSIA**



## CHAPTER I

# PHILOSOPHY AT THE DAWN OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

*NUR KIRABAEV, ANATOLY SEMUSHKIN AND VALERY GUBIN*

By the end of the twentieth century frequent topics of discussions are the end of philosophy and the emotions associated with it. This end is seen in various ways. One is the sidelining of philosophy by science – when all philosophical issues lose their metaphysical character and become empirical problems of natural science. Another is the self-destruction of philosophy through deconstruction and postmodernism; its creative impulses fade and gradually degenerate into the history of philosophy as attempts to gain a retrospective overview.

This is more than an arbitrary invention or a fashionable trend. It has a basis and a logic that leads one to believe in an approaching collapse of philosophy, or, to appreciate the characteristics and symptoms of the ailing world philosophical enterprise. The apprehensive approach of philosophers to contemporary struggles corroborates the view that the symptoms of philosophy's imminent demise are not merely an invention of philosophizing, panic-stricken and eccentric individuals. Politicized historiosophia, which argues that technological and democratized civilization has lost its inner capacity for development and self-improvement, plays a major role in spreading and entrenching a sense of anxiety about the fate of philosophical knowledge. With the advent of the post-industrial epoch, history in its “vertical” movement seems to have stopped, so that nothing else remains for her except self-improvement in its “horizontal” dimension. As a consequence, history would merely reproduce and refurbish its pre-determined models and samples in the intellectual life and in practical life as well.

With this historiosophical mindset there is a widespread tendency among philosophers to infer as follows: If the end of history is coming (according to Fukuyama, it has already ended) and history is doomed to reproduce and repeat what it inherited from past socio-cultural experiences, then the same fate awaits all cultural values, including philosophy. The validity of this conclusion is questionable. It cannot be verified and it is significant only for those who have no will or determination to confront it – as well as to those who are awed by its seeming clarity and finality. The very notion of the “End of History” is unnatural and it goes beyond rational bounds. Indeed, the “end of history” is no more than a metaphor which reflects the powerlessness and agitation of the political mind against the surprise and cunning of historical reason. If it is not feasible to link and adapt history to one's practical needs, for then nothing stops the

historiosopher and the political thinker from imposing an “end” and zero point on the development of history. This imposition has nothing to do with actual historical reality.

In other words, the term, “end of history“, tells us not that history is stopping and turning into mere mimicry, but that we do not know exactly which way it may go in surmounting modernity, and thereby leaving the historical thinker astounded. In addition to this, the experience that history has of itself gives witness to the fact that stagnation and decline of civilizations are not directly related to the decline and withering of philosophical doctrines. It is well known that repeated predictions of the “end” of the world turned historically into unanticipated beginnings of a renaissance. For example, the philosophy of the ancient Greeks had to become more creative and capable of a new level of contemplation which had not been possible for the prosperous and happy, classical epoch. So when the end of history is predicted, it is more logical for the adherents of philosophy to take refuge in the hope that we are awaiting and promoting a philosophical renewal.

The state of mind of the philosopher reflecting on the fate of modern philosophy is far more serious and dramatic than whatever historiosophers or priests, political scientists or pseudo-prophets say about its fate. This state of consciousness could be defined as alarming and nostalgic. It is alarming because the basis of the value orientations established by philosophical experience at the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has lost its vitality. Consequently, philosophy has been compelled to acknowledge its unproductive, anachronistic and dependent, parasitical condition in society. It is nostalgic because the realization of its restlessness and its ejection to the edge of socio-cultural life are accompanied by a sincere and painful yearning for the “good old days” when philosophy was capable not only of imaginative thinking, but also of healing the spirit, cultivating people, and even of preparing and implementing historical revolutions. If the present state of philosophy can be called a crisis, it is only because such a sincere view is truly burdensome for the modern philosopher. It is painful to witness the devaluation of intellectual work (philosophizing) in the daily practice of intellectual life. Two interrelated factors stimulate and explain the decline of the authority and the creative role of philosophy. They also promote infantile and simplistic rationalization.

The statement that philosophy is a sacral doctrine seems to be unusual and far-fetched to the modern mind. Hegel, the logician and rationalist, already considered philosophy as an initiation discipline, analogous to a religious sacrament. In order to study philosophy one has to be initiated into it – that is, it is necessary to believe in the metaphysical essence of the world and of man, and thereby to manifest that essence in accordance with, and on the basis of, metaphysical belief. Otherwise, philosophy either becomes useless and unnecessary, or it ceases to be philosophy. It is in this sense and not as faint-hearted concession to

religion, that one has to evaluate intention and purpose. One also needs to keep in mind the attempt of Kant to limit the pretensions of theoretical reason or of philosophy with belief. When not limited by sacral bounds and norms, reason falls into self-delusion and loses both hope and perspective. Hegel's belief in the sacral character of philosophy, the integrity of its boundaries and its spiritual character is manifest in philosophy – especially at the dawn of the modern era, when philosophy was treated as a religion in the period of the Enlightenment. When religion was denounced by enlightenment ideology, it became profane and worldly, and thereby lost its mission (salvation). The same is true of modern philosophy in becoming mundane, rationalized and democratized. Thus, it has lost its depth, its metaphysical instinct and its spiritual aristocracy in the sense of Plato and Berdyaev. This was steadily replaced by the “dialectics of enlightenment” as known in modern parlance.

Here we face the second factor that discredits philosophy – the penetration of socio-scientific, quasi-philosophical or pseudo-philosophical knowledge into the original domain of philosophy. This entailed the appropriation and deformation of the original rights, aspirations and goals of philosophy. The penetration of non-philosophical concepts and methodologies into the womb of philosophical ideas and spirit is pernicious to philosophical culture. Philosophy is not repudiated as an intellectual remnant of humanity; on the contrary, its study and dissemination are encouraged in varying degrees. But in pursuing philosophy this way a fictional and pseudo-scientific image ensues: positivistic functionalism replaces the essential grounding of the world and humankind. Thus, the wisdom inherited from philosophers is traded for some external and masterly sleight-of-the-hand. Metaphysical bewilderment gives way to topical pseudo-problems and an empirical description of daily life.

The dramatic character of the situation is underscored by the fact that, together with philosophy there exists a modernized philosophizing equivalent that actually runs counter to philosophy. This contrast might be harmless or even beneficial to true philosophy, but philosophizing modernism is expansive and aggressive: it presents itself as replacement for genuine philosophy. No wonder then that many creative thinkers who adhere to and love the traditional style of philosophizing regard the modernist pseudo-philosophical movement as a satanic invasion of the traditional sanctuary of philosophy. This invasion could mean philosophy's impending demise. Heidegger had observed that philosophy was drawing closer to its end. It is carried out as an empirical science such as sociology, anthropology, statistics, pedagogy, etc. – the science about everything, which is grasped, experimented and tested by modern technology. Modern science has its methodological basis not in philosophy but in cybernetics (the theory of information). It encompasses everything from the theory of the rotation of the planets to human labor; it regards even art and creativity as objects and instruments of information games. In its long history, philosophy has been regarded as ungraspable and unfathomable as it tried to

decipher nature, history and humankind. Today, these have fallen under the sovereignty and prerogatives of science. Philosophy is seen as no more than a disappearing rudiment of fantasy and mythopoesy.

In the last two decades there was a tone of destructivism that distrustfully and aggressively rejects any classical form of philosophizing. This turns philosophical anxiety into a language game that parodies philosophy and its achievements. The origin of postmodernism is closely connected to the formation of a rejuvenated variant of the information consumer or of international capitalism. Its formal and substantial characteristics reflect the internal logic and demands of capitalism. In its hegemony the sense of history becomes dull, the faculty of remembering one's past is lost, and one is consumed by a tendency to live only in the present and hold varying views. This situation, in turn, leads to forgetting all life-informing traditions that have been cultivated, saved and supported in the past.

The central idea of postmodernism is the arbitrary borrowing and use of elements or fragments of a cultural heritage; hence, patchiness and eclecticism are inevitable. The pressure of this accumulated diversity leads to indecision, confusion and, in the end, rejection of depth and hierarchy. Current postmodernism is a manifestation of the end of modernity; it is a situation in which choice is either meaningless or impossible. The context is that of a game to sort through past cultural values. It entails decomposing the atomistic individual and demolishing "repressive" borders or frameworks that bracket cultural activity. An eclectic form enters not only lyrics or epos, poetry or painting, but also science, art, religion and philosophy.

A new theoretical framework gradually takes root in every human activity. The merits of Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze and others consist of their sustained efforts to change the style of intellectual practice. They introduced new categories of language and new conceptual space in which the classical style of philosophizing with its metaphysical intuitions, play of imagination, and reverence for the secrets of being no longer have a place. The contemporary epoch is very complex: for thousands of years we have disassembled accumulated texts and problems. Postmodernism does not go in depth; its world is one of surfaces and it plays with particulars. Postmodernism does not start a new direction in the development of culture; rather, it irrevocably finishes the old. Deconstruction has carried the task of structuralism to its logical end – it showed its inability to create something new. It closed humanitarian scholarship unto itself, and turned the world of culture into a labyrinth without exit.

Thus the philosophy of the new century must begin with a revival of metaphysics, a philosophical rehabilitation of the human being. By becoming a mass of standardized modern education and upbringing metaphysics quietly disappeared both from postmodernist conceptions and from real life. In this plan, Berdyaev's melancholy characterization of "new Middle Ages" is not at all an anachronism of the 20th century. However



astoundingly it may sound, medieval spirituality in the triumphant century of modernism does not lose its metaphysical importance, instructiveness and edification. In spite of its language and dogmatic predilections, it prompts us to see the productive attempts of Christian thinkers to designate and express in their own way an image of the human as a metaphysical being whose function and purpose have no analogy in the material-natural order. Subsequent philosophical thought has not freed itself from medieval philosophy – it broke loose only from its scholastic instruments and confessional restrictions. Consequently, Berdyaev's idea of a "new Middle Ages" expresses no more than his disappointment with the progressive secularization of modern European philosophy and contemporary consciousness. His longing and search for a renewed religiosity analogous to that of the middle ages also come through.

The crisis of modern philosophy is but a small part of the crisis of modern culture based on its old secular forms. A new fruitful communication between philosophy and religion is needed so that the energy of religion can give new impulse to the transcendental aspirations of philosophy, i.e. its "cosmos-ification". Philosophy should be neither a justification of a social order, nor a search for ways of building a just social order; it should not even be a set of recipes for a happy and safe life. Certainly, it can deal with all these goals, but applications to incidental functions are not what is philosophical in philosophy.

Philosophy is the search for transcendent reality, the search for being, i.e. that invisible and hidden basis which both creates and supports all that exists, and gives sense to human existence. The human being is not so much a physical and social, as a metaphysical, being. If there is no task beyond the immanent, then any type of philosophizing irreparably degenerates into fruitless scholastic exercise in the possibilities of language, and concerns about the technical aspects of cognitive procedures. Weightier questions can be posed by a philosophy that is spiritually enriched with religion. As can be observed in the example of postmodernist destructivism, philosophy becomes a sort of literary criticism –whether one likes or not. But for literary criticism to exist and blossom it needs the literature which it investigates. Original and deep intuitions, distinctive images of life, painful efforts of sages and prophets – all these are necessary for the existence of philosophy. Examples can be found in its history (the philosophies of Al-Ghazali, Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, Berdyaev and Heidegger). But it is necessary to go further, to the unfathomed and untried philosophical-religious judgments and understanding of the current situation of humankind, in order to find a way out of the "global night" which is descending upon us.

Philosophy is beyond all confessions or religions; it is a free science which will never replace theology, and precisely will never sink to become a servant of theology. But the gist of the matter is that original metaphysical experience, the transcendent experience in which reality opens to us, is always a deeply religious experience. The further philosophy

departed from religion, the more it became a doctrine on the formal mechanisms of philosophizing – and the more it became “literary criticism” without literature. Ancient philosophy paved the way for Christianity. The experience of philosophizing in subsequent centuries should play a similar role in relation to the dawn of the 21st century. Only a new religion can open new perspectives for spiritually exhausted Europeans. As A. Toynbee shows, any epoch of decay and decline ends with the appearance of a “Universal Church”.

Belief lies at the basis of every fundamental knowledge–belief as an openness of the human mind to the world, as a perception of the world in its integrity. Belief should be at the core of philosophy. We are compelled to trust that being is irrevocable, i.e. it is the basis of our existence, that there is another world which is not subject to spoilage and suffering. Hence, there is an opportunity for essentially new vision and discovery of being. We have to believe in the possibility of not simply the symbol, but as Russian philosophy of the 20th century has underlined the real transformation of our existence. “Only God can still rescue us” declared Heidegger in one of his last seminars for philosophers and physicists.

The global direction of 21st century philosophy does not at all interfere with the development of the perfection of the formal-technical combinations of philosophical analysis, which is used almost triumphantly by the schools of current postmodernism, critical social analysis, etc. It is necessary only to remember that all these are particular problems, which do not relieve philosophy of the responsibility of facing the main task.

## CHAPTER II

# CONTEMPORANEITY: SOCIO-HISTORICAL BEING

*PYOTR GRECHKO*

It is not necessary to prove that public life is deeply historical. Historicity is the first of all changes and differences. Hence it is important to identify or determine a time scale in which differences are observed. In order to have a full, panoramic and live review of history it will be necessary to begin from contemporaneity, which is at the top of these differences. Contemporaneity as context always provides some “pre-understanding” of nature, society and man. To be clear, it is necessary to emphasize that by contemporaneity we mean not only living in the present, but also at the level of advanced peoples – along with generating progress, keeping pace with the age, and being at the edge of historical time. Other aspects of this concept will be clarified below.

### CONTEMPORANEITY: WORLD OUTLOOK AND METHODOLOGICAL COORDINATES

In Russia, contemporaneity was discussed easily, extensively and with pleasure prior to Perestroika. In a certain sense we were even moving ahead of the contemporaneous and were living with the hope of a bright future. We always held to futurism to a great extent; even during the best – the “gold” and the “silver” – years our culture was captive to the idea of a special, epochal role or mission for Russia in the world. But with Perestroika the situation changed abruptly. Contemporaneity unexpectedly left one-sixth of the Earth, and suddenly we became unmodern in the sense of not being contemporary: a difficult situation which implies the question – what to do? The obvious answer is to change much in our life in order to bring it closer to contemporaneity. But this is too difficult; it is much easier to question contemporaneity or modernity itself, which is what some of our scholars did.

Based on the authority of L. Wittgenstein, they distinguished between scientific and vital problems, with contemporaneity in the latter category. This distinction between the scientific and the living is, of course, not really innovative. It can be seen in the already traditional differentiation by the Baden School of Neo-Kantianism of the “sciences of nature” and the “sciences of culture”. Contrary to E. Durkheim, objective facts in social science are impossible to obtain, so it is also not possible to address pure scientific problems that demand clarification of statements concerning some empirical realities. But does this mean that the living or existential

problems of the sciences of culture are entirely notional? Do they not have any social-objective or inter-subjective reference; are they only imaginary but nevertheless demanding answers to questions like: “How should we live?”, “For what do I live”? Certainly, not. Many authors insist on the opposite: seeing in contemporaneity not a condition or state of affairs, but a certain existential experience that involves subjectivity and consequently is very relative.

Another way of “undermining” the problem is no less remarkable: holding that contemporaneity is always situational and contextual, and so it is not possible to formulate of it a general theory. The situation – that is, the concrete-historical conditionality – accompanies contemporaneity from the onset of the latter. This is the destiny of all social formations as defined within history. At the same time historicity (situational and contextual position, etc.) is not sufficient for refuting any “general theory” of contemporaneity in the given case. Along with all the variability and fluidity of historical reality, Some internal core remains. Otherwise we would live in a world of complete uncertainty, diffusion and chaos. And would we then live at all?

There is one more attempt that is purely Western: because it is local provincial in scope, it is bound to diminish (“belittle”) the problem of contemporaneity. B.G.Kapoustin, one of the supporters of this approach, writes openly: “(The West’s) problem of modernity or contemporaneity is nevertheless its individual provincial problem.”<sup>1</sup> We cannot agree with this in any way, although at present the West has problems with contemporaneity.

Anticipating the subsequent statement, let me say here that the direction of the search should be different. Contemporaneity is historical only in its subsequent parts – that is, because it originated in a particular time and place. The place is the West which is the native land of contemporaneity; the time starts in the 17th century. In the West and nowhere else contemporaneity or modernity is peculiar and original – and thus, historically primeval.

Though this question is not simple, it has also a purely methodological aspect: whether the local or the provincial is able to have in itself a break from the universal, worldwide and historical. Should the worldwide and the historical interact and synthesize with each other; or, may their unification be local or regional? We emphasize that the question is in developing a universal or general content of the socio-historical process. This is not “through” or “by means of”, because that inevitability leads to an arithmetic averaging from the general (universal). Rather, it is “within the limits of” or “inside” the separate, inside the local or regional.

The general historical in the individual local or regional is quite possible and history provides definitive evidence for this. For example, we

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<sup>1</sup> Boris G. Kapoustin, *The Modernity as the Subject of Political Theory* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1998), p. 21.

refer to the “axial time” (*Axen Zeit*) splendidly described by K. Jaspers. At that time, somewhere between the 8th and 2nd centuries B.C., universal cultural samples were developed independently of each other in ancient China, India and Greece. Until now they serve humankind; and for humankind as a whole everything that eventually became universal originated and developed in local centers of culture. The spatial isolability of these centers<sup>2</sup> did not prevent them from becoming historically universal, producing general forms of the human essence and radiating a world or universal spirituality. Since the axial time was the original moment of the truth in history and of history, one can generalize that the universal exists in the local – at the same time, it not limited to the local. Similarly the theory of evolution claims that in time, a whole new species may develop from an individual and chance mutation.

Probably, the historical evolution of the human race does not necessarily arise at the vanguard either. There are the avant-garde and those at the rear, the talented and the mediocre. Some strive forward and test the limits everywhere; others prefer to develop at their chosen pace. Breakthroughs, which later become common and ordinary, familiar and convenient, are made by those who are farther removed from the beginning, tradition, and spontaneous reproduction of life. Those who storm the future offer non-standard, creative interpretations of the tasks and problems of their time.

Returning to the axial time once again, according to K. Jaspers modern science and engineering can be considered the most significant event after axial time itself. However, this is not an event but a whole epoch which still continues and whose origin relates to 18th century European history. In front of us lies a process that is limited in time and space with respect to genesis and universal horizons, which are themselves the work of world history. Thus everything is here: the universal, the local, the global and the European. It had been created in the form of the local and the regional, but it turned out to be global – historical and worldwide – probably because of the volume and depth of the material it brought to the surface. As a result, it became more than what had been intended. “The Western person“, as Toynbee remarks, “was destined for historical achievement – to make something not simply for himself, but for humankind, something so large, that our own provincial history would be absorbed by the results of this performance. [By] making history, we have exceeded our own history”<sup>3</sup>. This “have exceeded” is the world-historic act achieved by the West-European. Its main components are: instrumental rationality, progress and emancipation or liberation, which brings with it knowledge, industrialization, democratization, market economy, individual

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<sup>2</sup> See: Karl Jaspers, *Sense and Purpose of History* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), pp. 33, 38, 93.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization Before the Court of History* (Moscow: Progress, 1996), p. 66.

freedom, initiative and responsibility, culture of compromise, tolerance and many other things which concretize and supplement these three main things. Contemporaneity has gone down in history through innovations in history. Contemporaneity is modern to be exact. But before our discussions, we should introduce some terminological and other clarifications.

### **CONTEMPORANEITY AS MODERNIZATION**

In historical science contemporaneity as a chronological reality is named “new time” (*Novoe vremja*). But in the West it has a different name: modern time or modernity. This name is remarkable in that even at first glance it expresses the essence and sense of a peculiarly new epoch. Modern characterizes society as new: “modernized”, “new European” and “new temporal” are synonyms. According to B.G. Kapoustin, modernization is the proper way of existing in modernity or contemporaneity.

Thus, contemporaneity in the sense of modernity emerged in the West. It finally brought Western civilization to the category of the original and unique. However, originality and recurrence are interwoven in one historical unit, which is regional. Therefore, additional explanations and reservations are required once again.

Actually in the European precedent of modernity resources for humankind were made available. Certainly, the picture was not very attractive because there is a lot of blood and dirt in European history. A lot had been given by natural interaction of cultures and civilizations and antiquity – the historical root of the whole of Western civilization definitively shows this. Thus, the Greeks had received the knowledge of mathematics and geometry from the Egyptians, and the knowledge of astronomy from the Babylonians. Antiquity had also borrowed from the East many beliefs and religious cults, handicrafts, technical inventions, political institutions and military arts.

However the main resources, supplemental to the Western break into a new modernized way of life, were not received by exchange or borrowing. At that time, in general, they preferred not to receive but to take things by force or threat. The robbery of foreign lands and their resources, the merciless exploitation of the populations in colonial territories, swapping capitals and other resources into the mother country, introducing Christianity by fire and sword – these and similar actions were integral elements of the process of modernizing the West. They were considered natural, justified by time and its difficult problems.

There are enough reasons to criticize the West for this – as well as to condemn it and hold it in shame. But considering the impossibility to undo what has happened, it is better to work with the actual history and look to the future instead of the past. In any case, the West has managed to muster enough force to be in the avantgarde, on the edge of history and take a jump into the obscurity of the modern.

Could something similar take place somewhere else, in different cultural environments? It is unlikely because here there is something of historical chance which turns up only once – it produces a single copy. Further, there will be selective borrowings and mechanical transference, creative imitations and recurrences. Thus, the usual, routine history will be continued. But we are talking about the first case of the origin of contemporariness in the form of modernity, which demands innovation, courage and self-feedback – this is not the ordinary but rather a unique case. All that is really new and fruitful comes with it and remains in history.

Max Weber brilliantly unveiled this historical dialectics in the example of the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. As it has been shown by Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, etc. capitalism is able to exist and successfully develop on any ethical grounds, but with respect to its origin here M. Weber was right that it is certainly tied to Protestant ethics.

The original Western contemporaneity or modernity is especially repeatable, because it is induced by technology and instrumentality. To a certain extent and in terms of function and distribution-repetition, rather than of origin-creation, these are neutral in terms of values. Independent of values, technicality enters easily into any culture, but after it has entered a culture it works more efficiently with analysis, knowledge and understanding, rather than with belief. In the long strategic prospect, the functioning of technicality is supposed to be coloured with the tones of its origin, i.e. it pulls behind its “own” values. This is not technological determinism, but it can be called an increase in the organic feature of the reflection of the whole on the part. It is also an enhancement in the integrity of the reflection of a part on the whole – including enhancement in the technicality of the system or structure of society. In culture, where “the poet is more than poet”, technicality is inadequate; however, sooner or later, the poet remains only a poet, in part because of the technicality involved in the understanding of what a poet is.

So, the originality of contemporaneity in the form of modernity does not vanish; on the contrary, this originality is repeatable – in the sense of historical predetermination or inevitability as can be seen in the case Eurocentrism or in that of liberal “end of history”. But modernity is only one of many variants of development: a possible prospect of historical creativity that is adaptable and correctable with regard to the concrete circumstances of time and place. In other words, the universal potential of contemporaneity or modernity lies not in compulsion, but in the invitation to repetition. But why “to repetition”? Could this be a veiled form of the same compulsion? Yes, there is something in historical repetition that is compelling; but the compulsion derives from similar problems or challenges – not from their solutions or answers. The latter depend on people with their own consciousness and will, and take the form of historical choice. It is impossible to forbid living well, but it is also impossible to forbid “living badly” – nothing can prevent anyone from doing so. It seems that in history there always will be the conservative, the

obstinate and those at the periphery. Because of the pressure that leads to repetition, one can surmise the tendency toward globalization. Globalization transforms all large historical changes through transcultural processes, regardless of who initiated them and where they emerged. However, globality is already outside modernity, and this is a separate question to which we will return.

### **PAST CONTEMPORANEITY AND PRESENT CONTEMPORANEITY**

By the end of the 20th century in the West, criticism of the basic ideals, concepts and norms of the modernist style had begun; the feeling that the modern epoch was coming to an end became dominant. Related conceptual generalizations also appeared: the historical inconsistency of technical civilization, the decline of Western democracy, the failure of the liberal model of development, the ecological deadlock of history, the collapse of spirituality, and so on. For some reason there are many such generalizations outside the Western world, especially in Russia. If we trust them, we witness the decay of capitalism that is next, because we had already gone through one in the form of a general crisis – or, to be precise, we had already swallowed it. There was a joke on this occasion: It rots, but what a pleasant odor! But perhaps, it was something else that rotted because the smell does not deceive anyone; and perhaps, the same is happening now. Let us examine it.

The crisis of the modernist style of life is a natural, evolutionary and consecutive process; actually it is the crisis of development. For certain reasons something dies off, falls to nonexistence and becomes a legend. But the basic mass event is still directed to the future; it keeps moving forward, taking the whole situation to a new stage of development. Opportunities are not at all narrowed; on the contrary, they are extended, and the forces do not decrease but are overflowing. People do not tire in searching for an adequate historical form of life.

Eventually, the crisis of the modernist style of life is caused by the dynamism of social life. It is not the stagnation or internal emptiness of the modernist style. Rather, the multiplication and the importance of human needs (not their reduction to a subsistence wage, poverty and survival) impel a dynamic social life. In a crisis of this sort, attention should be focused not on the exhaustion or depletion of the internal potential for development, but on its thorough and deep realization, comprehensiveness and blossoming.

One example is reason, which is one of the main targets of the critique of modernity. Time has revealed its limits and opportunities. But at the same time Western society suffers not from lack of reason, but from its excess, which is close to crushing all the other abilities and powers of the person. To crush means not to connect with, nor to involve, the specific resources represented by these other abilities and forces. Meanwhile they



are called for by the movement of time. It is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to understand the logic of the excess of reason when one take into account its deficits, i.e. when reason is inadequate, when “grief from the intellect” and all of existence do not pass the test even for common sense.

Western civilization thrives on the principle of maximization. In general, it is true, not only as regards income and profit – as it may seem at first glance – but, for all the parameters or indices of public activities. There is also an aspiration for the maximum of perfection. Sometimes this process falls into a pathology, i.e. illnesses characteristic of perfectionism. The crisis under these conditions comes from the completeness and totality of realization, and consequently from the maximum of development, instead of its minimum. The energy of this maximum is enough not only to bid farewell to the past, but also to face the future adequately. The crisis of development points to the past, but development itself allows passage to the future. It also initiates its historical construction.

Returning now to the present problem of contemporaneity, the modernist maximum obtained historically sooner or later must overstep its historically fixed limits. In the last quarter of the 20th century this outcome or transition was clearly indicated. In this regard it is possible to argue with Jürgen Habermas<sup>4</sup> who insisted on the incompleteness of the project of modernity. This project had not been completed, because despite all attempts it cannot be completed – it is too great an ideal for real historical practice. At the same time, it can also be said that it has been approximated, because in the given historical practice of the West over the last three centuries it was impossible to realize it more convincingly and fully than what the actual results exhibit so far. There is no sense in expecting something more, even when one agrees with the dialectics of the maximum because the maximum also has a limited character.

#### **FROM MODERN CONTEMPORANEITY TO POSTMODERN CONTEMPORANEITY**

After modernity exceeds its historical borders a new historical epoch begins – that of postmodernity. This is a successor because in history there are no absolute breaks. At the same time, it is an opponent to modernity for history does not know any absolute repetition. Transition from one epoch to another entails reluctance to break away and has the character of a sequence. This is because there may not be a fully postmodernist style of life without a previous modernist style of life which the former is trying to overcome.

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<sup>4</sup> See: Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity – Uncompleted Project?”, *Voprosy Filosofii* (The Problems of Philosophy). (Moscow, 1992, No. 4).

Realistically it is possible to consider the mentioned transition and its links as a process of displacing modern contemporaneity by postmodern contemporaneity. In other words, contemporaneity in “today’s” interpretation is “nowadays” postmodernity – or postmodernism in a conceptual sense. To be modern now means to be postmodern, or, half in Russian, *postsovremenny*. This sounds unclear, but it is significant because it can be interpreted as follows: in our dynamic century one cannot trail behind time, nor is it enough simply to march in step with time or the present; it is necessary to be slightly ahead of the present time. Today’s contemporaneity is futuristic as it has never been before; as time, it flows from the future. “Contemporaneity” is substantially isomorphic with “post-industrial civilization”. Actually they are synonyms because in a sense only post-industrial civilization – also called information society – is modern and meets current historical trends.

Interpreting contemporaneity in terms of post-industrial civilization raises certain issues. For the time being post-industrial civilization is developing and many of its features can hardly be recognized; other features have not yet taken shape. Apparently the object of reflection and research is not developed. In such a situation even the theory cannot claim completeness and rigor. Inevitably there are many extrapolations, forecasts, scenarios of the development of events. In this connection there is truth in those authors who present the post-industrial stage of social development as a *practopia* – it can be practically realized while it remains utopian. Thus the general historical uncertainty related to post-industrial civilization is supplemented with the risk of realizing utopia. However, it is unlikely that this will frighten anyone; on the contrary, it brings optimism and pride that we have finally reached such a level of development that now it might be possible to realize utopia as well.

## **HISTORICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF SPIRITUALITY**

Contemporaneity has many dimensions of which spirituality is one. At the same time, this dimension is a matter of great urgency for our time; that is why we explore it in depth.

One of the widespread generalizations in modern culturology is a decline and devaluation of the spirit and of spirituality. In spite of the variety of the proposed definitions, it is possible to find something permanent in them. A certain invariant, namely, spirituality is a set of fundamental or basic values for the person and his or her active being. A consensus concerning this set of values is the ground of social life and it determines the direction and stability of historical development. One can mark out pre-industrial (traditional), industrial (modern) and post-industrial (postmodern) periods, in each of which spirituality has its a particular form. During the pre-industrial period it was anti-material; during the industrial, non-material; in the post-industrial period, post-material.

It is banal to remark that the values comprising spirituality are not material; they are so by definition. But in the chain the prefixes “anti-”, “non-” and “post-” have a special content. They identify time and they refer to the interrelation between the material and the spiritual in public life.

As already noted, “anti-material” refers to a traditional society. To the traditional mind this stage is already behind in time. But for the “mythological” mind which typically makes a syncretic unity of the material and the spiritual, “anti-material” is ongoing. The opposition between the material and the spiritual has not even begun to show. Words come mixed with things, thinking is shaded by sensual “picturesqueness”, and there is only a vague feeling of something beyond.

Eventually, however, the situation changes. The original syncretism of the material and the spiritual gives way to the increasing difference between them. A “developed” traditional society like that of the European Middle Ages, is characterized by a sharp opposition (our “anti”) of the material as the dark and the low to the spiritual as the bright, noble and eternal. In this situation spirituality fulfills a complex compensatory function. It helps one to live, or rather to survive, under conditions where the material basis of public life (i.e. economy, politics and the social sphere) is underdeveloped. Something is operating like the law of communicating vessels: the less “matter”, the more spirit. There is constant poverty, arbitrariness on the part of the authorities, social alienation-stratification, and because of all these, there is disorder in life. Thus, one searches for salvation in the spiritual sphere. It is good that the spiritual is sensitive, pliable and easily accepts illusions, imaginations, dreams, and other random constructions and prospects.

Clearly, to resolve this problem (i.e. to become a kind of guarantor for the existence which is not secured materially), a special quality the spirit is needed – that is, as in stoicism or asceticism. The Spirit is self-sufficient and gravitates to the absolutization of its original elements (values), actually exists in a traditional society. It cultivates mistrust and contempt for material welfare. It encourages one not to find life hard and undeveloped and to consider as virtue the discomfort of everyday existence. It constantly stimulates and mobilizes man in various ways. This means readiness to survive the inconveniences and deprivations of material life. It is also readiness to show with enthusiasm, optimism and confidence, to all external and internal ill-wishers and enemies that “ours is the best in any case”. Sensuality and bodilyness are belittled, driven into the margins and pushed to the periphery as something too low and vulgar to be a cultural attraction and of historical importance. They are surrounded with a wall of restrictions and abstinence. Public opinion is concentrated on the questions of morality and morals, as if only they were worthy of man and bring justification or meaning to his life.

However, with time, the world opened to new trends and changes. Tradition was not able to fulfill its primary goal, namely, to bring sense and order to society. Along with the saturation of life with goods and services,

the democratization of public life, the softening of social pressure, the transition from personal interdependence to dependence on things only, there were changes in way the material and the spiritual were viewed as opposed to each other. The prefix “anti” in spirituality was replaced by “non”. The spirituality of industrial society, which came to replace the traditional one, began to accumulate non-material values. In this case the “non” demands less snobbish opposition of the spiritual to the material, more attention to the real, even if these were not high requirements of practice and life. In terms of domestic realities the movement towards industrial or modern spirituality is a transition from intellectual justice to intellectual truthfulness; from an abstract-substantial equality in morality to a concrete-formal equality in law, from lyrics to physics; from being to mode of life.

Morality and religion prevail in anti-material values, law and technocracy in the sense of professionalism. By contrast, competence, intellectual responsibility and business reputation prevail in non-material values. In general, along with “non” came more soberness, openness and transparency – in a word, disenchantment, as M.Weber would express it. Societies with anti-material spirituality live on the basis of concepts as we do, while societies with non-material spirituality live on the basis of law.

The status of spirituality is essentially modified by the market, which became really effective and general only in industrial society in the epoch of modernity when values turn into goods, and they can be bought and sold. Ideas, like things, are in a competitive environment and have to struggle for their place under the sun. These conditions certainly are tough, but they are productive if one takes into account the final results. More robust, technological and effective ideas come about – not far-fetched, but really working values and ideas.

Industrialisation is a dynamism everywhere and in everything – even in the sphere of culture and spirit-spirituality. Some revolutions are regularly taking place: in science, in the arts, or in sexual behavior. Values are constantly monitored to detect the degree of their “wearing out”; myths, for their ability to charm. There is no time for public consciousness to digest alternative values, or to assess experimentations with social norms – and deviations from these. Ethical relativity in the form of skepticism and nihilism increases. After reaching a certain critical mass, all these changes are directed to a new channel, which they themselves opened – the channel of postmateriality.

The postmaterial values of a new, contemporary epoch are unique. For present needs they are very fragile, but for the future they can be robust. Probably, this is the destiny of all new sprouts. The history of Western civilization took a long time to reach postmaterial values. There was a need to create colossal material public wealth and to be satiated with it in order to desire something greater. Moreover, the transition to a postmaterial value-orientation represents a real, existential problem. Many – and possibly the majority – are not able to forsake material well-being because

they have grown accustomed to comfort, cleanliness, satiety and warmth. Postmaterial values require a developed social imagination and courage to face transcendental change pertaining to the settled, historically tested way of life.

In the evolution of general, integrating parameters or indexes of life the movement toward postmaterial values can be observed precisely. In the beginning there was a standard of living characterized by the total gross output *per capita*, or more accurately the volume of material welfare – in particular food and income, their mass, structure and dynamics. The standard of living had been emphasized by measurements of this sort and by conditions like the living wage and the absolute or relative poverty line. The attainment of a sufficient level of life (i.e. historical saturation with various goods and services) allowed one to pass on to the next generalizing parameter of the quality of life. In addition to the parameters named here, there are also the availability of education, public health services and other benefits of civilization. These include: ecological cleanness of the habitat, the possibility of real control by individual citizens, groups – and by the population as a whole – of the development of political processes of their country and a high average life expectancy.

During the last decades on the crest of the quality of life there arose the need for subjective satisfaction from one's work and also from public as well private life. This need is a new postmaterial generalizing parameter of life, and of the level and quality of its development. Economic calculations of the human development index, or of the index of the development of human potential can be considered as approaches to this parameter.

With the generalizing parameter of subjective life satisfaction, it is possible to complete our discussions of postmaterial spirituality, as a dimension of postmodern contemporaneity. Another broad dimension is that of new humanism.

### **THE PROSPECT OF A NEW HUMANISM**

New humanism is another parameter or dimension of postmodern contemporaneity, which is being born right before us. The previous, simple humanism, which was clear to everyone, turned out to be too abstract. It was directed not to a living, concrete, individual but to the person in general, and as such, to the person in sense of humankind. In other ways, it recognizes in the individual only that which unites him with similar individuals – as their equal. An abstract humanism, internally undifferentiated, arises when one does not see the trees but only the forest. It is a kind of Gestalt-humanism.

Such an abstract humanism can realistically be named ideocratic. To please the hypostatic idea of man, it cultivates indifference to the destinies of individuals, of the many individually unique men and women. Somehow, as always happens, this man-Idea is personified first in the leader, chief or father of the nation, who turns out to be the most human

man; and the praises of human greatness are attributed mainly to him. Besides its ideocraticness, abstract humanism also displays an ideological character. With its help the existing social orders are officially consecrated, and in such an atmosphere an individual feels himself deeply uncomfortable as he does not fit the Procrustean bed of man as such. As an ideology, abstract humanism successfully saps the individual of his energy to resist the universal, its unlimited expansion and its dictates. The spiritual situation formed in this way is characterized by powerful external bonds and, at the same time, by a loud internal emptiness. For the time being the first outweighs the second.

Certainly, abstract humanism has its objective justification. First, society as a whole has developed and should continue to develop for a long time. This is in consideration of its individual parts. The limited intrinsic forces of man and society dictated this particular interactive logic. Secondly, the links among the undeveloped individual parts had to be external, unilateral and abstract. This means that behind the abstractness of humanism there is an abstracted underdevelopment and limits for life as lived by individuals. The prospect of a new humanism is identifiable only with the completeness and development of human life.

The new humanism is aimed at strengthening and raising the personal advantages of every person, at creating conditions for a valuable life of concrete Ivans, Michels and Johns. “One–Zero, One–Nothing”, “we will pay any price” – all similar motives are alien to the new humanism and should by all means be removed from our lives. From a supernumerary of history, man should be turned into a valuable – if not socially, then individually – significant agent, figure, actor, who personally feels his participation in history.

Through democratic participation a person returns to politics, and politics – already a positive social value – will take its proper place in the internal world of the person. Thus far, majoritarian democracy is actually reduced to participation in various “groups of triumph or indignation”, in performances under the general name of an “election campaign”, in manipulated rating polls and other actions. The prospect of a new humanism renders politics inadmissible because politics is cynical and officially indifferent to persons and life. For politics an individual is just a small cog, pawn or a means for the achievement of private or narrow group goals; politics recognizes only the laws of large numbers, statistically averaged parameters and measurements.

In terms of economics, the new humanism is called upon to encourage innovation and work out of personal initiative, investments in creative and professional growth or social partnership, extending opportunities and means for free economic choice, developing social and economic justice, providing everyone with a minimum of living that is not offensive to human dignity. Other goals and processes should be familiar and clear to everyone.

In the social sphere the new humanism further reduces inequality among people – in particular, it develops sensitivity to inequality in terms of life forces, abilities and talents. There is inequality in terms of intellectual capability. In general, this inequality cannot be avoided, but certainly one should learn to evaluate and accept it in a humane manner.

Actually, the spiritual horizons of the new humanism are represented by the values of a constructive and harmonious development of individuals, as well as by a strengthening of their originality and personal self-identification. But the main thing is happiness, perhaps in terms of that subjective satisfaction from work and life – we mentioned it in connection with the postmaterial parameters or indications of human life.

Certainly the list of key parameters or sections of postmodern contemporaneity can be extended. The phenomenon is extremely complex and many-sided. However, the dimensions considered here are sufficient for a general – but still adequate – conception of the future. However, it is not automatic; one does not wait for the future, but rather brings it about by means of a futuristic openness of mind, trust in development, a disposition for historical adventure, and purposeful and persistent work. In general there are a lot of stages or niches in history, and it is possible to remain in any of them as long as the circumstances require.

## **A GLOBALIZING CONTEMPORANEITY**

The image of contemporaneity would be incomplete without reference to its new historical form – globality. Globalization brings for history new structural differentiations or distinctions which considerably enrich postmodern contemporaneity

There is no uniformity in interpreting globalization; the current views are not only multiplied – they are also polarized. On the one hand, it is an expansion of opportunities for strengthening the original, or individual existence of all the subjects of the historical process: individual persons, social groups, peoples, countries and regions. On the other hand, this is a “ninth wave” of history, sweeping away in its path all appearances of identity and originality. It has been obviously simplified: wait a little and everything will be fixed. However, globalization is blamed for almost all deadly sins: chaos and criminalization of social life, a general degradation of morals, an impoverishment of whole countries and regions, etc.

In the oppositional (or binary) model, globalization presents nothing new. This is a common way of revealing and sharpening new problems. But globalization is a new problem – unique and radically new. Quite often its uniqueness is not noticed or it is deliberately ignored. In our opinion, the largest confusion in this problem is brought by those who equate globalization with modernization. Actually they are different historical periods and fundamentally different processes. Globalization, viewed as a process that increases integrity within the framework of the modernist epoch is modernization; but the “modernization” of the

postmodernist epoch since the last quarter of the 20th century is globalization in fact. In the latter case modernization is in quotation marks because globalization is coherent and organic, not to modernization, but to postmodernization.

The bosom of globalization is post-industrial, and Western society is its ground. It draws therefrom its vivifying juices; it feels at home there. But the main thing is that it is there; that it bears fruit properly. In any case, globalization is not to be taken with reference to the planet. It is not the one and only regional phenomenon; nor is it the process of “the consolidation of the advanced countries in their opposition to the rest of the world”<sup>5</sup>.

On the contrary, globality does not resist, but rather embraces; it involves, and it covers. If there is opposition to it, it is historical, i.e. it is distinguished by time rather than by space. But the problem lies in this: how to understand this involving or covering. Some would understand globalization as an isotropic informational-technological process, which uniformly covers the whole globe – without any breaks and without local “crystallizations”. But, most likely, it is a mistake to expect this uniformity. It is not likely that the process of globalization in the contemporary world is global, i.e., it is not uniform and not frontal. One of the most common and, undoubtedly, accurate images that come to mind is the World Wide Web or the Internet. This image can serve as a reference point for its general structure and organizational texture. The structure of globalization is discrete and broken, composed of separate concentrations or crystallizations which can be called enclaves. Therefore, the global process of contemporaneity is structured as an enclave.

It is interesting that the Universe, as proven by astronomers, has a cellular mesh or porous structure, which can be seen on the specially processed photos of the starry sky. An enclave is a specially allocated territory, a “free zone”, which lives in accordance with its special laws and is not similar to its closest environments. The enclave and its environments are two ways of life, two different worlds, which hardly understand each other, if at all they do. The globalization enclave simply bypasses other territories, flows around them leaves them untouched. It gives them a chance to stay with their interests in the same property. In other words, the enclave structure is a case where palaces quietly adjoin huts without being ashamed of their wretchedness – but are rather indifferent to their destiny.

The dialogue between the globalist enclave (the centre) and its environments (the periphery) is deeply asymmetric. Dialogue requires parity and equality between the participants. It is unlikely that this condition is met in our concrete case. If the dialogue could be settled by an exchange of words, then it would be easy to have and maintain equality. But in reality

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<sup>5</sup> Vladislav L. Inozemtsev, “An Open Society Behind the Closed Borders”, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent Newspaper). NG-Scenario. 2001, No. 6 (62), June 10, p.15 (7).



the dialogue never happens to be so abstract or narrow; and if it happens, it may not go past the initial stage, where intentions are merely exchanged. All resources are engaged in a valuable and essential dialogue: These resources include the skill to conduct discussion and defend one's position; the structure of dialogue also opens to external observation as well as to the economic, political and cultural realities that serve as infrastructure of the exchange of ideas. Quite often the infrastructure is more important than the structure itself. Being invisible, it considerably affects the visible outline of the dialogue and the voices interlaced in this scheme. The weight of the categories of the enclave and its environments, though obvious, are simply incommensurable. Therefore equality in their dialogue can be maintained only by politeness and not by addressing essential issues.

The difference between modernization and globalization is taken in broad terms and presented in diverse ways. Moreover, against this long-term background of globalization we can evaluate modernization more adequately. At the stage of modernization the West was eager to change the world into its own image and likeness. The West believed that the change was possible, and that it was required for the progress and happiness of the whole non-Western world. From here world-constructing activities arose: colonization, religious (Christian) and civilizational missionary work, etc. Under globalization, the West completely rejects this plan. Now it is simply duplicating its own image all over the world. And if we observe something different, – say, a violent introduction of Western standards of living – this would indicate not the essence of globalization, but that the transition from modernization to globalization is continuing. There is time for everything; life does not accept drastic turns. The periphery was drawn into modernization by force; in contrast, nobody invites anybody else to join globalization.

The holism of modernization or of the modernist style, when the part had been pulled up to the whole – as personified by the center – and it could rely on the whole for help as it is irrevocably passing into history. Fragmentation, decentralization, autonomisation, mistrust of privileges and hierarchy and of points of view, structures and positions and the like – in a word, “liberation of the parts” changed holism. Globalization is an exploitation of heterogeneity and differences; it does not promote homogeneity and unification. The potential of the latter was drained at the stage of modernization.

In the contemporary global historical situation there are gladness and grief, advantages and shortages. The advantages are as follows: nobody encroaches upon local, regional, and other features or differences. This is strange enough, but the process of globalization has highlighted and presented them for us in full measure. Every country, nation, social group, or individual person may affirm himself on his own choice and initiative. Grief and shortages include: recognition – if not the encouragement – of differences actually leads to rights (even the right to become stagnant). In addition, globalization has pushed the market principle to the limit and

made it total in terms of its potential for penetration. Now this potential is being applied not only to goods and services, but also to values, views and world outlook. Everyone can be free to advance ideas, but the outcome will be determined by market competition. Everything, including national culture, has the right to exist. Actually it has the right to survive under conditions of the most severe market struggle. It is clear that not all will pass the test of the market and competition. Value and normative bankruptcies will become a reality, if they have not already.

Postmodernization as globalization guarantees the existence of all kinds of originality, idiosyncrasy and other social and cultural intensities. But the guarantee here is very original and specific: it covers only subsistence and not development, which stipulates a transition to a new and higher quality of life. Now, with originality, it is possible both to be consolidated, and to grow endlessly. Postmodern globalization excludes any aggressive attacks, because it has already seized everyone. In this situation there is no hope for help from the outside. Much now depends on an historical choice and on the “will to development” by boundlessly independent subjects of history. Everyone has the chance to break through to the post-industrial epoch; the only thing required is to take the chance.

Like any other new process, globalization has many negative consequences. It is easy to find them, and it is even easier to criticize them. What is more difficult is to offer something constructive that really works to change the situation for the best.

A critical, but constructive offer can be accepted as an alternative. The question is whether or not an alternative to globalization is possible – at least, in principle. We begin at the level of principles. The alternative criticism at the level of principles is well known; is the role of utopia in culture irreplaceable. As has been wittily and figuratively noted by Oscar Wilde, there is no need to look at the world map where utopia is not marked, because this map ignores the country which mankind diligently seeks. The utopian alternative to globalization is required in its own way: it develops social imagination, stimulates the mind and makes the process of perceiving historical reality more multi-dimensional, more rigorous and discriminating. However, this is merely an ideal and theoretical prospect. It has only remote relation to the real historical creativity of people. A valuable historical project requires different grounds and more advanced conditions for it be realized. Obviously, ideological enthusiasm and a noble strong-willed drive alone are not enough. As the joke goes: theoretically it is a horse, but practically it does not carry anything.

The question must be defined concretely: whether or not a real, practical and historical alternative to globalization is possible. The answer, in brief, is that it is not. Though in many respects this sounds like “yes”, history is far from being linear, and there are no unequivocal and automatic working laws behind the real subjects of history.

Nevertheless in the haze of history a certain sequence can be discerned. First, it is indicated by a permanent set of opportunities, which is

determined by each specific stage of social development. This set is at the basis of the real historical choices made by society – or, rather, by the people who are the real acting subjects of this society. It is impossible to choose what is not present, not planned and not aroused in life. The broader the set of historical opportunities, the richer and more promising are the social life and the views concerning the varieties of further development. Together with the progress of a society, its historical opportunities increase but their quantity and quality are limited.

Further, historical sequence is determined because change in the stage of social development has its own logic of continuity and sequence. In history it is impossible to get from point A to point C, bypassing or ignoring point B. But does this bring us back to the linearity of history already denied by both time and criticism? By no means; history is really not *Nevski prospekt*. It is full of zigzags, reverse movements, stops, roundabout ways, alternate maneuvers and other “curvatures”. However, let us consider the conceptual, instead of the material side of the problem: all curvatures, all “abnormalities” of history assume a certain ideal image of what and how it should be – of what is correct. If history consists not only of spontaneous, but also of conscious rational activity of people then it becomes clear that the ideal image should attract and orient history.

After successfully applying the reference point to the real (read as: practically realized opportunities of social development) there will be an optimum historical choice. History itself clearly shows that not all are optimal historical choices. Therefore, we are talking about good luck. Those who are lucky shoot ahead and are in the vanguard of history. The luck of macroscopic historical choice redounds to the optimality of the decisions taken by people on the meso- and micro- levels. This means that the advanced versions of development are attractive, because they are closer to the optimal, the effective and the productive – not because they are different and novel.

Certainly, it is possible to defend earlier forms of life which have depleted their historical resources. It is possible to write with a goose feather even when there are pens, to use an abacus and arithmometer when microcalculators and many other advanced gadgets are available. But all this is either banal backwardness or self-protective ideological opposition – and most probably both.

At the same time it is not necessary to force events. Each stage of development solves a certain historical problem, which makes that stage necessary. By standards, i.e. in the case of natural-historical development, each stage leaves the proscenium of history – but not before it opens its own potential and serves out its time. Therefore, a historical stage retires not because it has become confused in insoluble contradictions and thereby has stagnated, neither because its intrinsic forces have not developed. Rather, it retires because it has completed the development of its intrinsic forces. The transition from modernization (industrial society) to globalization (post-industrial society) demonstrates convincingly all these

dialectics. Globalization is the overflowing of modernization which has filled its basic parameters to the limit. A qualitative leap is an adequate crowning of the integrally developing process.

Based on the foregoing, it is possible to state that there is no alternative to globalization. Its beginnings were not provoked by malicious will on the part of anyone. It is not a kink of history, nor is it a deviation from its natural way. Globalization was caused by the organic logic of historical development, supported by the initiative and projective or directed activity of the West – and in the long term, of humankind. As a result of the expansion or mainly the substantial fulfillment of modernization as “vital space”, globalization had to take place. It is a necessary stage in the development of humankind. Variety is not excluded but, on the contrary, is presupposed – although it is presupposed within the framework of a new historical type. In other words, there is no alternative to globalization, but there are alternatives or variants within its framework. They are presented by national strategies that fit in the modern globalization processes.

#### **THE HISTORICAL MULTI-LAYERED CHARACTER OF LIFE**

To sum up, it turns out that it is important to distinguish between the calendar-astronomical and the sociohistorical types of time. The first one is monotonous, linear and irreversible, i.e. forward and only forward. The second one is characterized by variety and is fan-like in direction. In this there are many different niches, positions, trajectories and modes and rates of moving forward. Certainly E. Bloch is quite right in this sense: “Not all people exist in the same “now”. They are united only externally [that is, because –] all of them can be seen today. But this does not mean that they live [in] the same time with others”<sup>6</sup>. People live under different times: some in the past, some in the present, and some already in the future.

Probably the specified non-synchronic time is valid not only for individuals, but also for societies: peoples, nations and civilizations. Literally we may say, that any stage in the development of one or another society is temporally multilayered or multisized. The temporal structure of a society incorporates time dimensions of the life of all its individual representatives. But its historical character is defined by the prevalence or dominance of one or another temporal mass. In other words the contemporaneity of a society is not automatically the contemporaneity for each individual living in it. People, or individuals live in different times even in the contemporary, most advanced, society. In this society there is a certain critical mass of “contemporaries”, on which depends the epoch.

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<sup>6</sup> Ernst Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and Dialectics”, *New German Critique*, 1977, No. 11, p. 22.

Current world history represents almost the whole history mankind which has opened in the space of the earth's surface, from a primitive-communal system (Australian aborigine, for example) to post-industrial civilization (the developed countries in the West and East).

Based on Toffler's calculations<sup>7</sup>, it is possible to imagine such a picture: 70 per cent of the earth's population live in the past (various pasts), 25 per cent in the present (in contemporaneity), three per cent in the future; the rest are simply marginals and they drop out of time. So, our situation is not just the classical "torn time thread". Rather, it is an accumulation or conglomeration of different times and of the very complex dialectics of their interrelations. In narrow professional terms, it sounds like a combination or simultaneity occurring in a different time. It is possible to restate the question on the original sociohistorical stratification of humankind. It is clear that stratification as a concept is commonly used for characterizing a single society. But in the perspective of globalization, which annihilates the differences between *inside* and *outside*, a society may be considered as a component of a stratum. Stratification variables include property or wealth, power or the ability to realize some goals even against the will of others, and prestige or respect from other societies. Thus, we have before us a multi-layered and pyramid-shaped humankind comprised of lower, middle and upper societies.

Certainly, no times have remained pure in their independence. They do not exist in our time when the world is becoming really global and interdependent. In one way or another, all countries and peoples have been involved in this process, and all sociohistorical times have been as well.

Nevertheless contemporaneity in the direct and full sense of this word is attributed only to post-industrial civilization or the information society. In all other cases special conditions and restrictions are required.

Contemporaneity in the form of globalization is spreading throughout the world, and in the form of enclaves that fit in any cultural environment, even in the most exotic. At the same time, the differences – the original historical times, along with their corresponding national, cultural and confessional features – are not being suppressed; on the contrary differences are admitted and encouraged. This is not aesthetics, but the real pragmatics of life.

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<sup>7</sup> Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*. (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1970), pp. 42-44.



## CHAPTER III

# CULTURE AND GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

*VLADIMIR MIRONOV*

The crisis of culture or even the death of culture is a favorite theme in philosophy – and broadly speaking among the intelligentsia in the humanities. This manifests itself especially at the turn of centuries, when philosophers review the results of the outgoing century and speculate on the contours of the incoming one. However, the 20th century introduced such significant changes to the development of culture that the crisis of culture now assumes new dimensions and impulses.

Today we are sinking into a new formation which has never hitherto existed, and which could be termed as a single communication space whose functional laws and integrative forces are so great that they compel traditional cultures to adapt under pain of degradation. Such a global cultural transformation was unknown before and, with certain exceptions, it can be compared to the invention of writing and book printing – or, even better, with the spread of World Religions. This novel situation engenders many results, some of which are analyzed in this study.

The quantity of information and the speed with which it is processed are increasing immensely, influencing even the character of individual intercourse. The volume of information literally overflows human life: the amount of such incomprehensible and superfluous information as ads, news-in-brief and TV clips, etc. is rising sharply. Gradually, humankind gradually is trained not to ponder information but to consume it. A situation of meaninglessness or emptiness accompanied by a great volume of information requires solving a new problem – namely, the defense of humankind from unsanctioned penetration by unnecessary and/or superfluous information into consciousness.

Being filled with bits of information we compress every minute of it, and our biological organs move at an accelerated rate. The swiftness of our feelings dissolves their meaning. If we compare our personal time with the flow of a river, and events as objects which flash in front of our consciousness in this swift stream, then the speed of the river becomes so fast that we hardly differentiate what lies on its banks.

But humankind is a peculiar microcosm, and therefore all these processes, which take place in one's consciousness, reflect in a condensed form wider processes taking place in culture. Destructive processes related to the contradictions between the traditional content and the new cultural-forming components arise in culture. In order to grasp these problems, we need to describe the traditional condition of culture.

Following K. Kh. Momdzhian, we understand “culture as the totality of the results of human activity, which had created a system of

traditional values material and spiritual in character.”<sup>1</sup> This is a good definition of culture which describes traditional culture or culture in the classical sense. Following Lothman, I shall use for this type of formation the term “local culture”, in the sense that it is a culture based first and foremost on a system of ethnic, religious and other traditions, which separate a given (local) culture from others.

Accordingly, my basic thesis is: now we experience a crisis of local cultures – it results in the development of a different type of culture. We will attempt to justify this statement.

One of the features of the local type of culture was an exaggeratedly optimistic valuation of science because reason was in the center of such a culture. Externally there was an attractive formula which expressed the sense of classical philosophy: “Reason-Logic-Education”. From this there were consequences which could divide peoples between backward and developed, and later justify the right of the developed countries to correct the others.

The development of the described culture was relatively slow. In relation to other phenomena, it represented a stationary, firm system, which remained the same for many generations. This culture represented the “firm or museum-materialized part of human society”, which was supplemented by the museum part of spiritual formations set in the form of traditional systems of the highest human values.

A relative stability or weak dynamics with respect to individual consciousness, an aristocratic principle of selection, elitism and isolation have resulted in the development of an adaptive mechanism which would allow each local culture to adapt new components and include them to the cultural system– without incurring serious consequences and not adapting in an insensible manner.

Because of this, when we compare local cultures remote from each other by large time distances, we easily find distinctions between them. On the contrary, when inside a local culture – that is, not far from it in sense of time – one would not be able to uncover these differences. This is because, as a rule, these were left to serve as frameworks of individual life and thereby, are invisible to the individual participant in that culture. Culture has always been a stable formation upon which generations of people replace each other, while each generation would not feel the changes in the culture.

Actually, however the culture is not simply a museum, but is also a live formation, a set of creative efforts of persons and of society as a whole. This live substantiation of culture actually is rather inconsistent and developing – further, it is connected with different conditions of life which

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Kh. Momdzhian, “Filosofia Obshchestva” (Philosophy of Society); V.G. Kuznetsova, V.V. Mironov, K.Kh. Momdzhian, *Filosofia*, (Philosophy) (Moscow, 2000), p. 377.



environ the people. On the one side, it incorporates stereotypes, traditions and norms of life, which are characteristic of the majority of people in their ordinary life. On the other side, culture contains activities and products that are far from the standard life stereotypes and conceptions. Rather, these activities and products are removed from reality and represent a special cultural layer.

The presence of two floors in culture – the “top” and “bottom” – acts as an important mechanism of adaptation: it creates the culture in general as a special system of dialectic unity of external opposites. Bakhtin was one of the first to pay attention to it; now G.S. Knabe is brilliantly developing this idea.

Each person participates in the formation of culture, and at the same time, tests on himself the influence of both sides of culture. The general features make people live in accord with certain conceptions of the common culture and orient their actions to certain standards. The features of individual life, life environments and conditions determine the form and character of the everyday life of a person. This life can be considerably distant from the elite forms, but it is connected with them through the norms and traditions.

The abstract, spiritual and purified part of culture is being gradually formed in the history of human civilization as the Culture “written with a capital letter”. It is, in principle, removed from daily occurrences and even from the individual. When we discuss the culture, more often we have in view the culture in the first sense (traditions and norms), whereas its second sense is too insignificant. Such understanding of culture is so typical that sometimes there is an impression that no other cultures exist. Before us an idyllic picture appears – for example, of the European Middle Ages, when peasants and craftspeople listened to Bach in the evening; after finishing their work they sang opera arias in taverns and danced ballet steps.

Thus, there is an idealized or even a brought-up-to-standard system of cultural values, which because of the above mentioned circumstances, is stable enough. It is sensitive to changes and it represents a real basis of universal culture.

At the same time, in human culture there has always been a layer of not elite, daily, local culture, and most people were always involved in the consumption of its products. Because of its openness this culture was less stable, and, hence, to a greater extent it was subject to changes. As Bakhtin has shown, carnival is a form of humorous culture – from the very beginning. In a sense, carnival was the expression of a local culture. It derides the high culture by trying to reverse it and thereby change the polarity and structure of the latter. In carnival the representatives of the bottom culture – all these clowns, buffoons and fools – are in the foreground. Temporarily they become the heroes of culture and show what is behind the culture – as with a mirror.

Thus the local culture appears as a certain, completed and perfected symbolic system of cultural meanings; and it reflects the completeness of

the person's existence and that of mankind. In the same way the opposition between its "top" and "bottom" parts is also considered completed, and the "top" is expected to prevail.

Thus, "completeness" is a principle of local culture, and it includes works of the human spirit expressed in music, literature, architecture, philosophy, etc. In all cases there is a completed work, where the structure is considered from beginning to end. The completed literary text follows the standard for texts, to which are opposed indecent texts from "local" cultures – torn off, with no structure, strange, or incompatible with the standard. The text of high culture is in the center of the understanding of local culture; sometimes it creates the impression that the local culture does not exist.

From the outside, the isolation and self-sufficiency of local culture appear in its opposition to other cultures. Here the situation is reverse. The "top" part of one local culture can be close enough to the other culture, but at the level of "local culture" an opposition between cultures appears large. This is expressed in proverbs, sayings and stereotypes concerning the perception and representations of the other cultures. Thus, the thesis about a unified culture is doubtful: it represents a metaphor, or at least, it has a character that is too relative.

On the contrary, each culture produces in itself a powerful skeleton, a certain "immunity" to other cultures, which does not allow passing on alien elements and influence. Therefore one of the central oppositions in a system of local cultures has been the identification of "friend-or-foe", where "friend" (in-cultural) was considered as true, while "foe" (as denying "my" culture) was considered hostile or false. In the presence of other cultures, participants in a local culture have always considered their local culture as the highest expression of human culture in general.

Thus, the dialogue of local cultures has been considered as an adaptation by the other culture to one's own (local culture). They did this by interpreting meanings, nuances or senses from the other culture within a framework of intercultural semiotic space. Here, as Lothman has shown, knowledge of the area of discrepancy with the original misunderstanding enriches the participants of a local culture with new senses and values. The primary means of dialogue is language, knowledge of which is the major precondition of understanding other cultures. Knowing the other language, I adapt or translate senses from the other culture. Comparing my culture with another, I understand the value and originality of my own culture. Thus, Lohman interprets the dialogue of local cultures as a special semiotic space that contains not only the sum of separate languages, but also the social and cultural field in which the languages function<sup>2</sup>.

All the above attributes seem to be characteristic of local culture, which was often identified as modern culture since the 18th century – i.e. from the time that *bourgeoisie* and science developed. But in this culture a

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

mood of pessimism also developed; the pessimism was connected to the fact that reason did not bring harmony and happiness to society. At the interface between the 19th and the 20th centuries, culture, on the one hand, began to be exposed to powerful pressure from the system of science and technology, and, on the other hand, it “squeezed out” science as a phenomenon poorly related to culture. The culture of this period continues to have its local character: it is similar to the classical culture, but to a greater extent it only imitated classical culture. At the beginning of 20th century, philosophers, representatives of humanitarian knowledge and art workers talked about the crisis or destruction of culture.

The informatization society sharply strengthens the processes that would destroy local cultures; it also strengthens the most important semiosphere of intercultural dialogue. If before this sphere appeared various cultures were only entering into dialogue, today all cultures appear to be involved in the global communication space. This situation imposes on us a dialogue that is not based on cultural differences but, on the contrary, a dialogue that derives from cultural similarities. This sharply changes the character of the dialogue among cultures. If earlier in history there was a sense of culture – and in decoding its senses for “the other” seemed to be a tool of adaptation – today the communication system compels one culture to conduct the dialogue between cultures under its laws and rules. It is as if the cultures are sinking into another, external environment which penetrates the intercultural dialogue and creates a precondition for integrated dialogue which has both positive and negative results.

Thus, it is possible to say that the modern condition of culture is in a stage of transition: from the local level to one that is integrative. The transition period has always been difficult and it required non-standard explanations based on the variation that the situation assumed. Then it connected to the probability of one or another result. For any researcher this is a very fruitful situation. It is a time not for generalizations but for forecasts, which in some cases can be checked almost instantly in terms of historical criteria. This is a difficult time for life, but also a happy one for political scientists, sociologists, culture scientists, economists and certainly for philosophers. Perhaps for general culture it is not a period for increasing and accumulating cultural values, but for determining the vectors of their development.

Since culture is also the system of “stably reproduced subordinate and coordinate relations among the symbolic programs of people’s behavior – made objective in sign systems,”<sup>3</sup> it is clear that the changes in the character of communication influence the said programs of behavior the

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<sup>3</sup> Karen Kh. Momdzhian, “Filosofia Obshchestva” (Philosophy of Society); V.G. Kuznetsova, V.V. Mironov, K.Kh. Momdzhian, *Filosofia*, (Philosophy) (Moscow, 2000), p. 377.

most. Accordingly, this allows us to give a different interpretation of the crisis in culture.

We interpret the crisis of culture as a situation of sharp change in the communication space in which the dialogue of cultures takes place, which more and more is erasing the borders between them. Like any crisis it carries in itself a charge of negative tendencies.

The modern forms of communications resulted in dominating the integrative language tendencies in the worldwide dialogue. One of the results of this is a submission of all other languages to that language which is able to distribute itself – to the greatest degree – because of political, scientific, technical and other conditions. The world either has already begun to speak the language of the countries which dominate the world, or is subject to the language of technical super culture (such as computer culture). As a result, the information field is being extended, but “pseudo-cultural” dialogue is also increasing, where the dialogue is being carried out according to the principle of learning the most accessible, coincident or almost coincident semantic structures.

In this communication field common stereotypes, general evaluations, general parameters of required behavior prevail as the popular, i.e. the simplest, components of the language. No doubt this is connected to a large amount of convenience, but at the same time it takes away all sense from the dialogue between cultures. We can understand any person anywhere on earth, but only at the level of coincidence or even identity of senses. This is communication with one’s own mirror image in accordance with the set stereotypes of communication. The basis for the dialogue of cultures and their representatives under new conditions is not dialogue as a mutually enriching factor connected to learning the other, but a pseudo-dialogue as when the parties supposedly communicate but actually listen to themselves first and only secondarily to others.

There is an empire of dead identity in the broad environments of external activity. All of this could appear fantastic. But have a look at the character of contacts in the majority of Internet “chats”. Have you ever met any questions on the sense of life? And is it really required to ask John in Wales or London how bad a person feels after many drinks? It may be easier to ask one’s neighbour? Now, the vast information system is loaded with such conversations and even pornography. Moreover, in the Internet, at least in its Western segment, there is a crisis taking shape that – in the opinion of young people – is related to the excess of textual information. So today many specialists are solving this problem by filling the Internet with a series of visual information and mainly entertainment.

This makes us ask ourselves whether the incipient integration formation of a super-culture will be humanistic, like traditional culture, or antihuman. What is to be done in general with both the positive and the negative variants of the development of this situation?

Moreover, this “crisis” of culture adds a sharp increase in the speed with which old values are destroyed, compressing the time for a process

that does not allow new symbols and marks to be adapted to the traditional system of values. This situation is aggravated by the fact that the thinkers evaluating today's cultural situation objectively belong to a previous culture in relation to today's; they evaluate it as if it is from the past. Having been educated in a certain system of traditions, they naturally consider that system as the cultural standard. It is very difficult to overcome this personal education; for many thinkers it is simply impossible.

The synchronization of culture is being affected, when its new formations are forming so fast that they cannot be adapted to the traditional system. People have no time "to absorb" new values and correlate them with previous ones as they begin to consume them. At the level of semantics it is fast filling the language with words and tokens which are understandable to young people, but not clear even for the middle age generation. This was not always so. Before, it would take hundreds of years for this and, probably, we would hardly understand all the terms used in the sixteenth century (enough to look through the dictionaries); today all is fitted to the framework of one generation.

In this connection my attitude to mass culture is not so negative as viewing it from a highly cultured and aloof position. Mass culture is a necessary local part of culture; it has existed and always will. What has changed? Again the same answer. The system of communications and means of retransmission have changed. Who in the Middle Ages could have learned something about four young men from Liverpool who played simple songs? One on the next street would become known in a week; one in another town, in a couple of years; and on in another country, never – or after 50 years. Today it happens immediately. Thus, the dominant factor is not the sense or quality of a creative work, but the system of through which it is distributed. From this point of view any classical work can become – and is becoming – a subject of mass culture because the relevant attribute depends not on its internal essence but on the system of its duplication. Bach, too, is becoming the subject of mass culture, like a modern group.

In this sense pop-culture is typical local culture which, due to the newest means of communication, has sharply expanded its limits and infringed upon traditional portions of culture. This is an example of a new integrative formation without fundamental ethnic, local or cultural basis. The works are inseparable from the masses perceiving it, and the means of technical reproduction is one of its attributes. The performer of pop music and his or her listeners are one whole, and it is impossible to imagine them without each other, as is expressed in the term "musical show". Show is a typical integrative (mass) formation, where it is not the individuals' difference from one another, but the principle of simultaneous participation that dominates. Participation in itself is becoming a form of communication, without transferring any sense – Richard Wagner had brilliantly predicted this situation in his works devoted to the music of the future.

The show penetrates so deep into people's lives that even the most tragic events can be a subject of entertainment. In 1993 people came to the bridge where there were tanks ready to shoot at "The White House", watched and waited for the shooting. The armed people executed their tasks, making their way through the audience which included women with baby carriages. The attack of American commandos is postponed when TV cameramen come late to the scene. Many people watch the latest tragic events in the USA as a regular visual series. The modern world is a big show and works according to the laws of the relevant genre.

For example, traditional attention to symphonic music was an internal dialogue of each individual with the musical composition. The presence of many people in the hall did not change the intimate essence of listening to the music. Today shows are always based on active behaviour and on the interaction of the crowd at the moment – and, thus, there are attempts to reach the people's reaction. The performer is perceived as part of the audience – this requires that his behavior comply with their mood, not that he be at an elite distance.

As a result we live in a society, where the carnival continues; it does not last for one or two weeks or months – as it does in local cultures: it lasts almost forever. The carnival or show, after entering into life and becoming a constant phenomenon, moves to the periphery as a semantic form of life. The natural balance between high and local cultures has been broken, and the disproportions of its parts are replaced for the benefit of the latter, right up to acting as an official culture in modified form.

Philosophy is part of culture; it is not simply a part, but it is the self-consciousness of the epoch and the soul of the culture. In terms of what has been stated above, it is clear that postmodernism, for example, is an expression of the general condition of today's culture. It is an example of the disproportion already entering philosophy, when its popular local part dominates. It is a kind of pop-culture within philosophy with the appropriate attribute of opposition to scientific and rational thinking in general; it is a carnival mirror of classical philosophy. Indeed, as Griaznov noted, in the classical tradition the role of language was underestimated and the principles of objectivity and ontology in philosophy were dominant. On the contrary, in postmodernism there is a turn to language, which is analyzed not as the means of a conceptual analysis of the objects, but as an original demonic source which by itself imposes the structure of objects and existence in general.

Postmodernism is fortunate as it has become the first form of philosophy to experience itself, and for us, a new form of communicative situation. It was hero and victim simultaneously. Not recognized by academic circles, it had to be addressed to the masses, which explains the phenomenon that is discussed much, but read considerably less.

The new communicative systems, such as the Internet, are realizations of the aspirations of postmodernism.

The postmodernist essence of the Internet lies in the abolishment of the not obligatory, but the possible and seductive responsibility of the author for the message he sends. There is a temptation and opportunity at any moment to slip down to insignificance and irony that fully comply with the atmosphere of postmodern. The Internet is the first mechanism to appear which incorporates the basic opportunity, . . . sporadic, but global in scale, to replace the dialogue and community of a responsible dialogical structure with one where such a structure is optional and selective<sup>4</sup>.

Postmodernists speak about the death of the author, the infinity of the text and variation in its interpretation, which has been realized in the Internet. Hypertext appears, which is unique to this situation in which “the presentation of information as a connected network of cells, where the readers are free to work nonlinearly. It allows many authors [to participate], erodes the functions of authors and readers and extends the work with indistinct borders and different ways of reading<sup>5</sup>.”

Any reader is able to keep reading a text, jump from one text to another and even develop different subject lines. If in the classic form the plot was given once and for all by its author, in hypertexts it is possible to develop an absolutely different subject line or even several subject lines.

Postmodernism catches the fragmentation phenomenon that existed in the modern culture and was related to the destruction of classic culture. It reflects the frame of mind of an epoch in which a person tires of reading long texts, whether they are samples of literature or of philosophy. Objectively one has no time for this. Time is now filled with fragments of the new formations of cultural phenomena. At the same time one has more freedom in expressing one’s own thoughts. This freedom allows one without delay to create his own schedule for explaining the phenomena that need to be processed.

In this sense the phenomenon of “soap operas”, which are watched by the majority of modern people can be explained. Among these people there are many who perfectly understand the art value of the given creations (and they can compare them to classical works). A viewer has neither the opportunity nor the time to keep in mind the structure of the author’s idea, as he would have had in the classics because the idea was developed by

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<sup>4</sup> G. Knabe, “The Principle of Individuality: Postmodern and Its Alternative Form of Philosophy”, *Russky Zhournal* (Russian Journal), <http://www.russ.ru/edu/99-05-24/knabe.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Michael Vizel, “Hypertexts on Both Sides of the Screen”, *Inostrannaya Literatura* (Foreign Literature), Electronic version №10, (1999), <http://novosti.online.ru/magazine/inostran/n10-99/visel.htm>

means of the plot that the author designed. For a viewer it is easier to look into a TV-set without getting a good grasp of the essence of the events observed than to look out a window and record a momentary event. Observing instead of reasoning is one of the aims of such a culture.

This phenomenon is becoming apparent in today's mass culture, for example in video clips presented as small fragmentary works. This fragmentary "clip" expresses the essence of mass culture. Here postmodernism is valuable because of its shocking insistence on its own object of research, which is inherent also in philosophy. That is more useful than simply to pour "crocodile tears" on the regular destruction of culture. It is more useful to understand the new, even if it seems unworthy of philosophical research.

In April 2001 a philosopher told me how she had "come" to de-constructivism. Her well-groomed appearance would not disturb public opinion, but there was a touch of the scandalous in her questions and answers. But it was exactly a touch, i.e. a form of scandalousness demonstrating the calmness of a philosopher as something classical in postmodernism. "Classic postmodernism" is a paradox which exemplifies the adaptative force of a culture that finds a place for all.

Somewhere the next trouble-maker in philosophy has already been born, who will surely destroy philosophy. The first object of his criticism will be those who are closer to him in time, i.e. the post-modernists. It might be useful to recall Hegel's thoughts for the very keen post-modernists and their future critics. Quoting the words of the apostle Peter to Ananias "Look, the feet of those who will take you out, are already out of the door". Hegel says what it means today: "Look, the system of philosophy, which will deny and force out yours, will not keep waiting long; it will not fail to come. It has not failed to appear after all other philosophical systems"<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on History of Philosophy*, Book I (Saint Petersburg, 1993), p. 82.



**CHAPTER IV**

**IDEOLOGICAL TRENDS IN  
CONTEMPORARY WORLD POLITICS**

*DMITRY N. BARYSHNIKOV*

The role of ideology in international relations became a subject of theoretical debate immediately after ideology was asserted in political discourse. Even earlier, major ideological elements which cover political acts and the use of propaganda for acquiring internal and international legitimacy could be recorded as far back as the Religious Wars in Europe, the Crusades and up to the dawn of history.

A strict scientific analysis of the ideological components in international affairs became possible after at least two circumstances had been recognised. The first one is the formation of the system of international relations between sovereign states in the 17-18th centuries. Under that condition all political phenomena found their outer limits and thereby acquired a more comprehensible character. The second circumstance was the assertion of political ideology as a set of theoretical concepts and its development by different social science disciplines in the 19-20th centuries.

The history of the theoretical debate about political ideologies and their role in international relations tended to be especially intensive and unpredictable as both phenomena were in constant change.

Marxism exposed ideology as false thinking that was used as a tool in political struggle; it had nothing in common with true theory because an ideology consists in “false conceptions . . . men have constantly made up for themselves . . . about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be”<sup>1</sup>. It is noticeable that Marx did not consider his doctrine as an ideology, but he interpreted it as a scientific theory of socialism. Nevertheless, Marxism acknowledges the “utilitarian side of ideology which is not more or less true, but more or less useful in the process of domination”<sup>2</sup>. In what concerns international affairs many versions of

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, Frederic Engels, *The German Ideology*. (N.Y.: International Publishers, 1970), p. 37; *Cit. by*: D. Weberman, “Liberal democracy, autonomy and ideology critique”, *Social Theory and Practice* (Vol. 23, 1997), ([www.questia.com](http://www.questia.com)).

<sup>2</sup> L. Althusser, *Pour Marx* (P.: Maspero, 1965); G. Hamilton, N.W. Biggart, “Culture and Authority: a Comparative Analysis of Management and Organization in the Far East”, *American Journal of Sociology* (1994); *Cit. by*: B. Venard, “Sense Forcing Through Political Ideology in a Franco-Vietnamese Alliance”, *International Studies of Management & Organization* (Vol. 31, 2001), ([www.questia.com](http://www.questia.com)).

Marxism have considered international relations as an above-the-state display of the class struggle and at the same time an expression of the rivalry among capitalist elites.

An alternative point of view initiated by Nietzsche puts values in the centre of the ideological discourse<sup>3</sup>. A strict division between “aristocratic” and “vile” systems of values naturally contributed to the rise of corresponding systems of ideologies and their use in politics. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the history of Nazism and Fascism manifestly demonstrated that a nation equipped with an ideology of its race or national superiority was condemned to wage an aggressive foreign policy since the value issues had become the central point of interest for thinkers involved in ideological studies.

The sociological approach to political ideologies was developed mostly by K. Mannheim<sup>4</sup>. His approach is apparently the closest to the theoretical. Sharing Marx’s ideas on the crucial role of the economic basis for social developments, K. Mannheim emphasized the possibility of an autonomous development of social reality or its dependence on non-economic factors. According to Mannheim any system of ideas is the result of a constant social atmosphere. Thus any ideology is an inescapable consequence of the philosophical attitudes of its producers<sup>5</sup>. Sociological analysis allows one to study the process of creating an ideology from the collective unconscious of political reality by different social groups. An ideology is formed and enabled to play its role after it is used by the ruling class as a philosophical basis for political activity.

Studies on ideologies in the 20th century led to the creation of a more detailed portrait of the phenomenon. Several basic characteristics of ideology are now shared by a strong majority of researchers:

1. *Idealism* in the models of social order advocated by ideologies: conditions which are not achievable in practice.
2. *Dogmatism* caused by some principles which may not be changed under any circumstances. For instance, if we eliminate the clause on individual human rights from a liberal political program the program would not be liberal any longer.
3. *Apology* for the declared principles: it presupposes a minimum of criticism and plays together with *dogmatism*.

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<sup>3</sup> See: F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (L.: Penguin Books, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (L. & N.Y., 1936).

<sup>5</sup> K. Mannheim, “Conservative Thought”, *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology* (L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul,; N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1953). See also: P. Kecskemeti, E. Mannheim, K. Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Culture* (Routledge & Kegan, 1956).

4. *Authoritarianism* in the sense that the ideology of the ruling social or political group demands drastic measures when used in practical politics<sup>6</sup>.

Ideological aspects in world politics have been touched upon by different theories of international relations. During the Cold War period when the ideological split in international affairs was most natural, interpretations of political realities were determined mostly by the ideological orientation of the authors at both poles. In contrast to communist researchers, their Western colleagues had more levels in their choice of the ideological foundation to use for their work. Nevertheless the character of the bipolar system influenced them: the existence of one side was a predetermining factor for scientific analysis, decision-making and, thereby also the political action of the other. Focusing on confrontation in mutual relations was determinative of the basic foreign policy principles in both superpowers. As T. Friedman once put it: The Kremlin was a “guiding star” for US foreign policy and *vice versa*<sup>7</sup>.

The classics of political realism interpret ideology as an instrument used by politicians in their struggle for power. For realist thinkers an ideology as a system of values does not represent any value in itself. So the content of an ideology and its moral impact do not constitute their core interest. They are more focused on ideologies as instruments used for achieving some foreign policy purposes. In that respect any ideology would belong to one of the following categories: so called ideologies of status quo, ideologies of imperialism and ambiguous ideologies, the latter being the result of a “confounding effect . . . present whenever an ideology is not made to order, as it were, for a particular type of policy, but can be worn by the defenders of the status quo as well as by the promoters of imperialism”<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless realists acknowledge that while remaining “neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for an active foreign policy, a high level of ideological self-righteousness will be conducive to an active interventionist foreign policy”<sup>9</sup>.

Neo-realism, mostly in K. Walz’s version, remains reluctant while taking account of ideological factors in international relations, in spite of the fact that the latter are no longer a pure struggle for power among actors in an anarchical environment and that serious systemic factors influence

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<sup>6</sup> Y.V. Irkhin, V. D. Zotov, L.V. Zotova, *Political Science* (Moscow: Jurist, 1999 (in Russian)), p. 345.

<sup>7</sup> Cit. by: K.S. Gadziev, *Political Philosophy* (Moscow: Ekonomika, 1999 (in Russian)), p. 361.

<sup>8</sup> H. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (Alfred-A-Knopf, 1973), p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> G. Evans, J. Newham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 237.

inter-state relations<sup>10</sup>. According to K. Walz, the bipolar configuration of the international system remains an arena for “power plays” between superpowers without relevance to the ideological aspects in their relations<sup>11</sup>.

Nevertheless neo-realism like many “neo-trends” in the history of ideas was developed on account of the influence and penetration by other theoretical approaches. Inasmuch as pluralism and globalism are the main opponents of political realism, their development and theoretical achievements including ideological attitudes should have affected a realist paradigm to a certain degree.

Pluralism as an alternative to political realism has its philosophical roots in the liberal tradition. The thesis asserting that any actor having a clear economic and thus political program can be a full-right participant in international communication perfectly fits a number of fundamental liberal principles. A great number of pluralist conceptions which appeared after the 1960s of the last century emphasized different aspects of international (or rather transnational) cooperation so that they were promoting the role of new actors in the world arena. Having different origins with regard to intellectual background and belonging with pluralism, those conceptions corresponded to many versions of liberal reasoning. What brings those functionalists, neo-functionalists, federalists and representatives of the “interdependence school” closer to each other is their stress on the contrasting styles of inter-group relations and the dominant role of consensus rather than conflict<sup>12</sup>.

Globalism, the third broad paradigm in international relations theory, is known under another name: neo-Marxism. This characterization is not fair to all the conceptions within it, but it perfectly reflects its ideological distinction from realism and pluralism. The question of the actor is not so important for globalism where the main unit of analysis is the global economic system created and controlled by capitalist i.e. “exploitative” actors such as states, transnational corporations and international banks. The main objects of that “global exploitation” are underdeveloped countries, former colonies which had declared their devotion to the Western values in the situation of the Cold War, but failed

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<sup>10</sup> See: K. N. Walz, *Theory of International Relations* (Reading: Addison Wesley, 1979).

<sup>11</sup> J.J. Roche, *Théories des relations internationales* (P.: Monchrestien, 1999), p. 85.

<sup>12</sup> For functionalist and neo-functionalist ideas see: D. Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966); E. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1951* (Stanford University Press, 1968); For federalist ideas: M. Croisat, J.L. Quermonne, *L'Europe et le fédéralisme* (P.: Clefs, 1999); For the ideas of complex interdependence see: R.O. Keohane, J.S. Nye, *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

to become full members of the free world<sup>13</sup>. Such an approach inevitably brings one to think about the class struggle in Marxist terms, extrapolated to a global level.

These three main theoretical paradigms in international relations originated and developed in the situation of a bipolar world as reflections of the whole ideological spectrum of the Western world. The very presence of a giant and powerful ideological alternative to state communism in its different versions brought realism, pluralism and globalism closer to one another and contributed to their mutual influence and inter-penetration.

The crash of communism and the end of the bipolar world was conducive to a tremendous shift in the ideological dimension of international relations. The defeat of the USSR – and thereby the historical defeat of communism – had been the key purpose of the politics of Western countries for 45 years. But, when it happened, politicians, the military and the academics were not ready for the rapid development of events. A global ideological vacuum together with a paralysis of strategic will reigned in world politics for several months in 1991-1992. A significant reflection of the euphoria that seized a great number of political thinkers after the defeat of communism was F. Fukuyama's *The End of History*<sup>14</sup>. Cold War inertia was palpable in his paper where the end of an ideological struggle was explained in terms of pure strategic analysis: because communism lost, liberalism would occupy the ground it had abandoned. At first glance Fukuyama's logic seemed incontrovertible and many political scientists shared his opinion on a new age of liberal democracy which "has thus just not one severe challenge, but three, proving its superiority in both military and economic competition against imperial monarchies, and two types of totalitarian dictatorship. In perspective it becomes clear that a whole round of historic struggle has come to an end, and that Fukuyama's (1992) liberal triumphalism is not without quite impressive foundations"<sup>15</sup>.

However in the same year that F. Fukuyama published his article such tragic events as the ethnic wars in Yugoslavia and the deterioration of the situation in the North Caucasus inflamed a considerable part of the post-socialist space. In those conditions one could have hardly declared the end of history and the dawn of a golden era for liberal and thus universal values.

Among a large number of conflicts, ethnic and religious clashes as well as social tensions, the hottest ones broke out roughly at the imaginary borders of Western civilization. The next year a new version of the

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<sup>13</sup> See: I. Wallerstein, *The Politics of World Economy: the States, the Movements and the Civilizations* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Samir Amin, *Le développement inégal. Essai sur les formations sociales du capitalisme périphérique* (P.: Editions de Minuit, 1973).

<sup>14</sup> See: F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (N.Y.: Free Press, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> B. Buzan, *The Present as a Historic Turning Point* (Journal of Peace Research, 32:4, 1995), p. 389.

civilisational paradigm appeared. S. Huntington's conception of the clash of civilisations opposed the idea of universal values. Each of the eight world civilisations distinguished by Huntington possessed its particular features well before the perspectives of global modernisation developed in the present age<sup>16</sup>.

Huntington suggested this as a subject for debate. Nevertheless, as his approach was used in political analysis (especially by journalists), critics and opponents discovered weak points in Huntington's ideas<sup>17</sup>.

The conception of "a New Middle Ages" was another attempt to surmise the most probable direction the new world order would take. "The absence of an organised system, the disappearance of any centre, the appearance of fluid solidarities" would be the main characteristics of the near future<sup>18</sup>.

One more example of the thinking about the future of international relations is not very new in the sense that the realist approach is still represented by a number of respected and frequently quoted authors, among whom are H. Kissinger and Z. Brzezinski. Their approaches differ as regards their perspectives on world politics and the US role in world affairs. But, as far as both are focused on a state-centered analysis, they can be considered as representatives of a conservative alternative to the new interpretations of the post-Cold War world order<sup>19</sup>.

The above examples do not exhaust the list of recent conceptions of the new world order. The ideological dimension of their approaches is present in varying degrees in every conception. Nevertheless, to the extent that speculations are elaborated by Western schools, one can reach a conclusion: These schools held different versions of liberal political philosophy – or, what is recognized as an all-embracing, "genuine" ideology that is based on a solid philosophical and economic basis.

The turn of the millennium brought us a paradox in liberal ideological and political discourse. On the one hand, an evident triumph of Western economy and living standards brought about by the spread of Western business culture all over the world determines the face of the Earth's civilization today. An unprecedented leap in high technologies and transport comes together with the discovery of a "cyber-dimension" in all spheres of life. These achievements of the Western world contribute to the

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<sup>16</sup> See: S. P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> J. Burek, "Clash of Civilizations: a Reading Guide", *The Christian Science Monitor* ([www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com)).

<sup>18</sup> A. Minc, *Le Nouveau Moyen Age* (P.: Gallimard, 1993), p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> See: H.A. Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (Simon & Schuster, 1994); H.A. Kissinger, *Does America Need Foreign Policy?: Towards a New Diplomacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Touchstone, 2002); Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1997).

development of negative trends within traditional Western political and ideological discourse. They also lead to a revival of many alternative rival “synthetic” ideologies. This is obvious in analysing the major trends and developments in world politics in the last decade.

The very term *world politics* was introduced to political science as a result of studies on the world economy and of political and social processes as influenced to a major degree by liberal thinking or a liberal way of life. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries international relations are no longer exceptional interactions among nation-states and international governmental organizations. Rather, they are a web of constant multi-level relations among all kinds of actors whose activities cross state borders. In that respect world politics is not an alternative to international relations, but an inclusive concept making international relations a cohesive part of global multidimensional and fast-moving interrelations.

Today the world agenda consists mostly of strategic plans and day-to-day politics determined by a group of the most powerful actors: big states (USA, UK, France, Japan, Russia), international bodies (G8, United Nations, International Monetary Fund, European Union), transnational corporations (Microsoft, Halliburton, etc.). Besides we should pay attention to the role of transnational informal political groups and the so called *world civil society* whose involvement in the global agenda is becoming more significant. What is the role of ideology in that context? To what extent do ideological divergences among the actors influence different aspects of their relations? Questions like these do not demand easy answers, but they need to be investigated for reasons more important than mere theoretical curiosity.

Beginning our analysis with the key actors in international relations, we should recognise that today, the role of ideology in their interaction is in direct contrast to what took place in the last two centuries. The French Revolution awoke the self-consciousness of nations and engendered a strong intellectual (hence, political) reaction. In its wake, mutual perception and political programs in foreign affairs tended to manifest an ideological dimension. Obviously, ideology and propaganda were integral parts of politics much earlier than in the French Revolution. But the year 1789 in Europe, undoubtedly inspired by the American experience of 1775-1783, put a solid *philosophical* foundation under a concrete political event and thereby made ideology a *rational* tool for achieving presumed and calculated political results. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ideology became the central concept of political discourse. Major political debates, military and diplomatic battles, were simply consequences of irreconcilable ideological contradictions and ways of resolving them.

The end of the Cold War seemed to eliminate that global ideological battle. The very fact that the communist regimes surrendered without any direct intervention by the West should have proven that Western values and the ideological doctrines advocating them had a

universal character. This was true to the extent that the newly independent states in Central and Eastern Europe declared their adherence to Western civilization and their devotion to basic liberal and democratic values. Victorious conviction in the universal character of liberal values – supported by a promising ease in their spread in the non-Western world – could have led to the idea about the end of history. But the course of events has been disillusioning for the most enthusiastic optimists, and the crisis of liberal thought and the limited adequacy of liberal politics are still on the agenda.

After proving its universality and flexibility during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, liberalism ceased to be distinguishable in its conceptual versions. Today liberal democrats, Christian and social liberals, national or conservative liberals do not seem (at least to a broader public) to be as clearly set in the political spectrum as they were fifteen years ago. Economic stability, social welfare and political superiority over the rest of the world allow the population and political elites in Western countries to take a formal approach to ideological nuances and to the political programs of parties and individual candidates. In that respect the presidential elections in the USA in 2000 represent a very characteristic example. Both G. W. Bush and A. Gore led perfect electoral campaigns, and all the formalities were scrupulously respected. Nevertheless, neither of the candidates was able to gain the upper hand by a significant majority and the winner was revealed only after a special recount in one state. Supposedly, one of the causes of the reluctance among Americans to firmly pronounce themselves as supporting one national leader was the vagueness of the candidates' respective electoral programs where "differences remained significant, but the election campaign was notable for the similarity of the issues stressed by the candidates and for the disappearance of older conflicts"<sup>20</sup>.

One could object to such an example by recalling the presidential elections in France in 2002 when the danger of coming to power by the extreme right *Front National* led by J.-M. Le Pen united the majority of the nation in favour of the then acting President, but not very popular, J. Chirac. It is true that the ideological debate in European countries becomes more acute during an electoral campaign, but normally this is relevant only to one nation and not for a long period of time. Until now no one political change in any European country has led to a serious crisis within the European Union. Even in 1999 when the extreme right Freedom Party won parliamentary elections in Austria, all the other European nations found a way to coexist with that country and to cooperate with its government for several months. Doubtless, after a European Constitution is adopted, ideological divergences inside the EU will be less significant in practical

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<sup>20</sup> G.M. Pomper, *The 2000 Presidential Election: Why Gore Lost* (Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 116, 2001), ([www.questia.com](http://www.questia.com)).



politics – both inside the member-states and in the relations between them – than they are today.

As the global agenda, it is unlikely that one would note a serious dependence of the key actors on ideological differences. The debate on the Iraqi problem in 2003 seemed to be characteristic in that respect. The whole world was witnessing the situation of a split among European nations – a split that first arose among their political elites. The overwhelming majority of Western states had no doubt about the criminal character of the Hussein regime and they also had no doubt about the necessity of international intervention in order to resolve the situation. The only sticking point was whether the coalition of the interested states had the right to start a military operation without the sanction of the UN Security Council. Certainly every nation had its own *pro et contra* rationale while taking a political decision, but it seems that the ideological implications were the last arguments in the decision-making process. Otherwise it is difficult to explain why conservative Gaullist France found itself hand-in-hand with a “social-green” Germany, and T. Blair’s labour office was of the same opinion as the Republican White House and its right-centred alliances in Italy and Spain. While formulating its attitude towards the Iraqi crisis every government in the world surely had its rationale determined by a number of economic calculations, historical stereotypes, internal situations or even personal ambitions – and, in the last place, by ideological reasons.

Powerful during the Cold War, the communist ideology, today stands at the periphery of inter-state relations. The overwhelming majority of nations from the former socialist camp in the later 1980s and early 1990s made their choice in favour of liberal values. Those who stay under the Communist rule today are in an unenviable situation. Some, continuing to consider the West as an irreconcilable enemy, are isolated from world affairs (Cuba). Others either are sufficiently strong and independent in their relations with the outside world (China) or feel sufficiently flexible to develop some relations with the West while keeping their ideological principles – and thus their political regime – invulnerable to foreign influence (Vietnam).

This ideological picture of the relations among traditional international actors should not be viewed as disappearing from the global political landscape. This simplistic view follows the line of the classical ideological doctrines that were forged in centuries and tested by state politics. Rather traditional international actors experience today a most serious transformation caused by globalisation, post-modernity and the appearance of new ideological trends. However, before coming to that subject, we should touch upon the problem of nationalism and religious fundamentalism in contemporary world politics.

Whenever one speaks of nationalist or ethnic components in different political events one should be aware that his interlocutors share the same understanding of the phenomena. The very concept of nationalism as an ideology is not fully recognised as deserving academic attention.

Historically, nationalism has the same origins as the major political ideologies – liberalism and conservatism<sup>21</sup>. As the French Revolution proclaimed the *nation* a collective sovereign, expressing the collective will of free *individuals*, the French and British monarchists reacted to that crucial event by declaring tradition and continuity as corner-stones of their *patriarchal* way of life. Nevertheless nationalism is much more vulnerable theoretically than many of the so called all-embracing ideologies. It is easily compatible with any other ideological construction. It was a flag of liberalism in the Golden Age of the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when nations struggled both for their individual rights and for sovereignty.

Nationalism and ethnic feeling instantly replaced Marxist ideology in post-communist territories just as they significantly reinforced their presence in West European and other political landscapes. In the Third World (especially Africa, South and East Asia), there is unprecedented outburst of violence where national ambitions and ethnic claims are ponderable components of the conflicts.

A new world order, whose vague contours we are just starting to realise, once again brings nationalism and ethnicity to mimic – and to adapt to – new historical conditions. In an age of a global economy and universalisation of culture, at the time when nation-states witness a dissolution of their sovereignty and lose their role as constitutive actors in world politics, people gradually lose a clear understanding of what is *national* and what is *inter-national*, what their *ethnic* identity is and how to protect it. It is often stressed that the wrong use of nationalist ideology is conducive to bloody and intractable conflicts. National and ethnic feelings on the macro-social level play a role comparable to that played by the feeling of belonging to a family. Thus a suppressed negative attitude or open hostility towards a national or ethnic group usually evokes stress and in irrational reaction on the part of those who associate part of their identity with that national or ethnic collective. It is no surprise that in such situations, unstable national feelings are often used by the elite to manipulate mass consciousness and steer many social and political processes to conform to their will. A large number of bloody conflicts in the 1990s and under-coordinated actions by the world society in conflict-management operations prove that the negative potential of ethnic nationalism is rarely manageable, and we are still far from a fully understanding its role in the future. The state of theoretical studies concerning national and nationalist issues is comparable to what happens in real politics, and thus the debate is open.

A comparable problem is characteristic of numerous versions of religious fundamentalism in regard to its identification and use as an ideological instrument. Religious ideology is apparently the most ancient among all the ideologies under consideration. Like nationalism it is

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<sup>21</sup> I. Adams, *Political Ideology Today* (Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 289.

compatible with many ideological tendencies. In the contemporary world there are several states where religious laws constitute the basis of the civil and administrative order, and so regulate the whole life of the society. The Vatican, Saudi Arabia and Iran are examples of contemporary theocracies that are involved in world politics. Besides one should mention political parties who put religious principles at the base of their political programs and so occupy a sector in the political life of different secular countries. In many cases this is not a genuine religious ideology; it is more accurate to speak of the religious roots of those ideologies many of which belong to the right and right-centre sections of the political spectrum. For instance Christian Democrats in several European countries keep the symbol of their closeness to the early ideals of Christendom, but in practice they rarely act from a militantly religious position<sup>22</sup>. In recent decades non-legitimate actors used religious ideology openly and very often aggressively for political purposes. These are mostly groups of religious fundamentalists, sometimes united in an association on the basis of religious principles and almost all of them support radical methods in their political activity. Among numerous types of religious fundamentalism the most influential in world affairs is Islamic fundamentalism. It seems that there are at least two explanations for why this is so.

First of all the very nature of Islam – this is because its origins postulates a very deep involvement of religion in the private life of the believers and in public affairs. A prophet and spiritual leader, Mohammed was acknowledged by his compatriots also as a political and military chief. Thus, for a Muslim, any political act is, at the same time, an act of belief. That is why in traditional Islamic societies it is almost impossible to distinguish between the religious and the secular sides of social life and political activity<sup>23</sup>.

The second reason for the political activity of Islamic fundamentalism is more of a political than an historic nature. Having been under Western rule for centuries, today the core Islamic societies is again the focus of rival political interests. Many Islamic nations live in regions that are of strategic interest to the great majority of states. Although the political and business elite in some Muslim countries is rather successful in cooperating with foreigners, the vast majority of the population rejects all that is non-Islamic – when any indication of modernisation confront traditional Islamic values.

In contrast to Islamic fundamentalism, representatives of the fundamentalist groups of other religions are not as active in the political arena; thus they are not as widely known to the public. Nonetheless, Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Sikh fundamentalist groups have their

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<sup>22</sup> Christian Democrats and People's Party International; [www.idc-cdi.org](http://www.idc-cdi.org)

<sup>23</sup> J.L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse University Press, 1987), p.

political programs and organisations and they influence political life mostly in their respective countries.

After the collapse of communism, religious fundamentalism – like nationalism – seemed to be the most accessible remedy for the lost group identity in post-socialist territories. In practice radical religious slogans have been made compatible with nationalist and, very often, with anti-Western ideas. That is why one can notice a tangible religious implication in many of the contemporary ethnic conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli one, conflicts in the states of Jammu and Kashmir and situations in the former Yugoslavia and the North Caucasus.

Reductionist capacities and a remarkable vagueness in their fundamental theoretical basis bring religious ideologies and nationalism very close to a number of so-called postmodern ideologies that play a unique role in contemporary world politics.

Today it is widely recognised that a tremendous shift in social and political life on a global scale has resulted mostly from unprecedented changes in all sectors of the world economy. In a few decades the pyramidal structure of industries were replaced with a “world-wide spider’s web”<sup>24</sup>. The development of a post-industrial economy is determined by consumer choice, advertising and the market of services. Consequently, the mass production economy removes masses of workers from the vanguard.

New production models inexorably cause changes in world trade and finance. New transportation facilities, storage and conservation technologies have incredibly enlivened global trade, just as “computer technology, together with new software programmes and new systems of telecommunication, have revolutionized world finance”<sup>25</sup>.

Postmodernism as an attempt to comprehend the contemporary social and political reality in its totality has been developing in France since 1979 when Lyotard’s first book was published<sup>26</sup>. Its key idea is that the age of great ideas and reliable social cohesion is finished. Emphasizing a direct link between the economy and social developments, Lyotard and others describe postmodernism as “characterised by a mixing of styles and multiple points of view, which they believe reflect and express the nature of the present age...”<sup>27</sup>

In that situation, fundamental changes inevitably take place in political and ideological discourse. “Old” all-embracing ideologies are no longer satisfactory in their intention to propound universal theories of social reality which, although globalized, becomes more and more fragmented. New ideological doctrines, fluid and derivative, tend to fill that postmodern

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<sup>24</sup> T.L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory* (Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 261.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge* (Manchester University Press, 1984).

<sup>27</sup> I. Adams, *Op. cit.*, p. 289.

political and intellectual vacuum. Not every political scientist acknowledges cyber-feminism, anarchic ecologism or spontaneous Marxist-like anti-globalism as full-value ideologies. Nevertheless they are more and more successful in playing the role of ideologies as conceptual assumptions and acceptable guides for political activity. Although postmodernist ideological trends present a true mosaic of diversity, they share common features:

1. *Feeble theoretical basis.* Rarely do the ideological constructions used by so-called “new social movements” (NSMs) discard their serious theoretical basis. Usually they are derivative of extreme forms of liberalism, socialism or Marxism and applied to a respective social group.
2. *Limited number of followers.* NSMs differ greatly as regards the number of their adherents. At the same time none of the postmodernist ideological trends is comparable with mass ideologies in that respect. This is due especially to the fragmented nature of the social environment where NSMs are developing and to their capacities for fusion.
3. *Anti-globalist rhetoric.* In spite of the fact that many postmodernist ideologies had their origin in liberal tradition, all oppose the shaping of the world order by the Western countries and liberal values. For instance political feminism in all its versions is a human rights movement adapted to the needs of one social stratum.
4. *Fusionism.* NSM developments possess such prompt dynamics and capacities for synthesis that one can witness more and more ideological trends merging in a new exotic version that would exercise no influence in world politics.

Obviously, the above-mentioned characteristics can be applied to different ideologies in varying degrees. Besides, no one can guarantee that all the ideologies will remain at the periphery of the “official” ideological spectrum. Some of them, especially those focused on the global problematic, are likely “to come to office” – that is to become the ideology of a big political party or even to assume power. First of all, this concerns the wide set of “green” ideological trends especially as we witness today their rather successful start in “official” politics in several countries.

Given an increasing number of new ideological trends – and of social movements which use them for their political activities – one should pay attention to those which can influence world affairs. Representatives of the globalizing *world civil society* paradoxically pronounce themselves against the very tendency of globalization and the liberal mechanisms which direct it. They cooperate and even merge with other informal political and political-like groups, and in many respects they form the core of the so-called world “anti-globalist front”. Today their influence on world affairs takes the shape mostly of anti-globalist riots during international

summits, but there are cases of systemic and even armed use of these new ideological trends.

Among the most known is the movement of Mexican Indians from the State of Chiapas for their civil and political right headed by *sub-comandante* Marcos, whose official name is the Zapatist Army of National Liberation (EZLN). This political group did its first remarkable political act on 1 January 1994 when Marcos' armed supporters occupied all the principal towns of the state of Chiapas. The main political demands of that group are connected to the unsatisfactory living conditions of the indigenous Mexican population who are Indians from tribes belonging to the ancient Maya family<sup>28</sup>. Nevertheless, Marcos and his adherents do not limit their requirement to narrow ethnic issues. EZLN is an interesting example of systemic struggle against the negative consequences of a globalized economy and the universalisation of culture. In one interview, sub-comandante Marcos expressed his conviction that we were all witnesses of the "fourth world war" waged by the world capital and the supporters of globalisation against those who opposed it. Besides he expressed solidarity with other marginal political and social groups (sexual, national and race minorities all over the world) suffering negative globalisation effects<sup>29</sup>. Certainly EZLN has become favourably known all over the world, first of all, because of its relatively wise use of arms. At the same time the Zapatistas widely use the newest means of mass communication in order to propagate their views and to gain allies all over the world<sup>30</sup>. From a theoretical point of view, EZLN's ideology is a typical hybrid of spontaneous nationalism and a postmodernist New Left paradigm. The latter is the result of development of conceptions based on the writings of such neo-Marxist authors as T. Adorno and H. Marcuse<sup>31</sup>. Today, there are some attempts to adapt Marxist ideas to the postmodern situation<sup>32</sup> and, in spite of the fact they are hardly compatible, any leftist anti-globalist movement will often be associated with "Marxist-like" ideologies.

Among the new ideological trends, the "greens" have a special significance. Like any other developing system of ideas, ecologism today displays a huge number of conceptions and movements very often fused with other ideologies (i.e. ecofeminism, anarchical ecologism, etc.).

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<sup>28</sup> I. Ramonet, "Marcos marche sur Mexique", *Le Monde diplomatique, mars* (2001).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> The EZLN's official site [www.ezln.org](http://www.ezln.org) is one of the most visited in the web. For other publications on EZLN see: *Le Monde diplomatique* (1999 (aout), 2000 (janvier)); E. Selbin, *Modern Latin American Revolutions* (Westview Press, 1999); M. Renner, *Chiapas: an Uprising Born of Despair* (World Watch, Vol. 10, January, 1997).

<sup>31</sup> I. Adams, *Op. cit.*, pp. 159-161.

<sup>32</sup> See: E. Laclau, C. Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (Verso, 1985).

Meanwhile an ecologist ideology is propounded much more successfully in meaningful and promising political acts. Partly this is explainable by the global character of the problems an ecologist ideology and “green” political movements deal with. Today when the global ecosystem is at the limits of its self-reproductive capacities the problem of sustainable development is a headline in the world political agenda. At the same time “green” ideas go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century where the first negative impacts of the industrial revolution became visible.

Ideological and thus political dimensions of the environmental problems came out after the whole complex of problems linked to people’s attitude towards nature had reached a certain degree of urgency. Roughly this happened in the second half of the 1960s, and since then one could speak only of the increasing success of “green” politics and the consequent development of ecological ideas.

In general terms the common thesis of all ecologist programs is the necessity to bring back the original harmony between humanity and nature. Human beings as part of the biological diversity and thus part of nature continue to create a very dangerous future for themselves by their own actions. The origins of the concern for nature are to be found in ancient Chinese and Buddhist philosophical systems<sup>33</sup>.

Having a clear tendency to become an ideology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ecologism in all of its versions still retains many features of postmodernism. First of all, there are attempts to reconcile ecologist philosophy with the liberal idea of progress by distinguishing between ecologism as ideology and green political theory<sup>34</sup>. In practice, however, green ideas and green politics are still incompatible with the liberal idea of progress and the dominant consumer approach to nature.

Contemporary feminist and liberation ideologies are another example of the postmodern transformation and diversification of ideological trends. Historically, the idea of the equality of the sexes dates back to the French Revolution when liberal values were applied as arguments for the women’s case in M. Wollstonecraft’s book *Vindication of the Right of Women* (1792)<sup>35</sup>. Since then both the movement for women’s rights and feminist ideologies have progressed considerably. The first period of the political success of feminism was experienced at the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when women acquired the right to vote in many countries. The second wave of feminist achievements fell in the late 1960s when it amounted “virtually to a new ideology”<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> I. Adams, *Op. cit.*, pp. 246-248.

<sup>34</sup> See: J. Barry, *Rethinking Green Politics* (L.: Sage, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> M. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Right of Wome* (L.: Penguin, 1975).

<sup>36</sup> I. Adams, *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

This period in the development of the feminist ideology was marked by the works of K. Millet and G. Greer<sup>37</sup> who injected a radical current and indicated an emerging connection between feminism and New Left movements. Thus socialist feminism has become a leading feminist strand which predetermined the present day postmodernist fusion of feminism with other “alternative” ideological trends.

After the striking success in the 1960s-1970s, political feminism declined - like other liberationist movements (for example, that of ‘sexual minorities’). In most Western countries the political and civil equality of sexes is an object of constant concern for the state and civil society. Under those conditions “many young women today shun the feminist movement, objecting to its assumptions of how women ought to think and feel”<sup>38</sup>. Nevertheless, the feminist movement is developing in the formerly socialist states, and at the same time the postmodernist tendency toward ideological fusion has become especially obvious in the appearance and development of such “ideological hybrids” as green feminism, black feminism, anarcho-feminism, cyber-feminism, etc.

Obviously it is not possible to consider all the manifestations of contemporary ideological trends in world politics in one paper. Nevertheless, it seems that the general conclusions of the present paper are as follows:

The fragmentation and multiplication of ideological discourse are only beginning. In a world where liberal ideology (in all its versions) and Western values are unconditionally leading systems of political discourse, “alternative” ideological trends have begun to pioneer the world political landscape. In that situation the traditional – and thus far the strongest – agents in world politics do not need a diverse set of political ideologies in order to fit to the main rules of international cooperation in a globalizing world. There are several examples where a non-liberal ideology dominates in one country. But some of these states stay at the periphery of world politics and very often they are practically isolated like North Korea and Cuba. Others try to find points of interest for restricted (more often economic) cooperation with the outside world while they use the world’s ideological regime for “interior consumption” (China, Saudi Arabia, Iran)<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> See: K. Millet, *Sexual Politics* (Virago, 1997); G. Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (L.: Paladin, 1971).

<sup>38</sup> I. Adams, *Op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>39</sup> Speaking about the latter one could object that Islamic fundamentalism which is official ideology in this country is propagated and spread in the world mostly due to the efforts of the Teheran regime, so it is wrong to say that fundamentalist ideology is used only in interior politics. It is true that religious fundamentalism has become a strong factor in world politics but as far as inter-state relations are concerned, since the Iranian revolution in 1979 no one country (except the never recognized Taliban regime in Afghanistan) has pronounced Islamic fundamentalism its official ideology.



That is not the case of new social movements which are diverse; and as active non-state actors they try to assert their presence in the world arena. As representatives of the most cohesive and active part of the world in civil society these groups use an alternative ideological discourse in order to affirm their identity. They oppose (deliberately or not) the dominating worldwide ideological system. Their inner flexibility contributes to an easy and constant inter-penetration that causes the appearance of such ideological hybrids as anarchical feminism or religious ecologism. At the same time, a common anti-globalist sense of their ideological purpose and the use of modern communication technologies allow many NSMs to play an even more active role as alternate actors in contemporary world affairs.



CHAPTER V

**“WAR ON TERROR”, POSTCOMMUNIST  
TRANSFORMATION AND GLOBALIZATION**

*PIOTR DUTKIEWICZ*

I will focus in this paper mostly on US-led policies known as the “war on terror” and will link this with the end of the Cold War, experiences of postcommunist transformation, and current processes of what I refer to loosely as globalization, as they intertwine and inform each other.

I will start by fully agreeing with John Lukacs’ statement that “during the past ten years (...) my conviction hardened further, into an unquestioning belief not only that the entire age, and the civilization to which I have belonged, were passing but that we are living through – if not already beyond – its very end.”<sup>1</sup> I also share Immanuel Wallerstein’s view that the “modern world system is approaching its end and is entering an area of transformation to some new historical system whose contours we do not know, and can not know in advance, but whose structure we can actively help to shape.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, I believe that until recently the fundamental changes in the capitalist core and in American policies – in particular during this century – took the form of evolutionary adjustments to given domestic and/or international challenges. In other words, took the form of schisms: F.D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” in the 1930s as a way to modernize capitalism; the Cold War as a mechanism for developing transatlantic cohesion against the Soviet Union.

This time, however, what we are seeing are rather fundamental – even revolutionary – changes in American foreign policy as a forced and rational response of the core capitalist system to structural strains. In this sense, the analytical framework for analyzing these changes would be one of heresy rather than of schism. This can be seen in the intention of George W. Bush’s team: that is, to question the logic of the remnants of the Cold War and Post-Cold War international system. Such a response is seen by many as disproportionate to the challenge, grossly misleading and misdefined, which is largely true. But in my view it is definitely adequate, considering the magnitude of the challenges and of the looming structural crisis. The problem is that the beginning of the end of the system as we have “known it” and its massive transformation will surely give birth to many similar initiatives. This will happen not exclusively in the area of

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<sup>1</sup> John Lukacs, *At the End of An Age* (Yale University Press, 2002), p.12

<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Decline of the American Power”, *The New Press* (London: 2004), p.170.

international relations – in order to maintain and stabilize the hegemony that is beginning to be more frequently questioned. I would argue that a meaningful learning process for the US started about fifteen years ago and far away from Washington, D.C.

My first question is how the US came to the point of world history where it became a willing hegemon. In other words, what was the learning process that America underwent for the last fifteen years, that concluded with the September 17, 2002, 33-page “National Strategy of the United States” that rationalized the US’ global role and mission? Some crucial lessons enabled the US to make definite conclusions about what is the most effective domestic and international order. Let me briefly elaborate these.

I. I will start with a discussion of postcommunism and globalization. In short, one of the most crucial lessons for the US came from Eastern Europe. With the collapse of the communist system, the United States became almost overnight the only global player. But that was only the beginning. Equally important in shaping future US policies were conclusions drawn from the initial period of the so-called “transformation towards market and democracy.” Most relevant among these were: the welfare state is costly, in particular when state-provided services are of relatively good quality. Thus lesson number one was that one can dismantle such a costly machine with no significant political costs (note: social costs are not a relevant argument here).

Eastern Europe served as a laboratory for a second important test – how far can one push labour without significant social protests and dislocations? Lesson number two was that one can make labour flexible enough to diminish its collective demands to a bare minimum, and push it as far as possible, while still containing social protests.

Lesson number three was that co-opting local elites is less expensive and requires less energy than had originally been thought. Not only that, they might become themselves willing agents for global interests. This was particularly visible in the Central European reaction to the war in Iraq – which was referred to by US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, by a new division into an “Old” and “New” Europe.

The collapse of Communism in the former Eastern Block propelled the ascendance of neo-liberalism as the dominant ideological paradigm of our time. This envisioned that the integration of East Europe into the world economy would eventually not only bring East European living standards up to par with their Western counterparts, but also would inevitably bring democracy through open markets. It was envisioned that through rapid integration these countries would be “locked” into irreversible democratic governance. This discourse assumed that an altered economic environment (i.e. market economy) would change human motivations and ultimately the behavior of individual actors. While the reforms were market-driven, the institutionalization of the new political environment (i.e. the adoption of democratic institutions, structures, and procedures), accompanied by a

modeled regulatory and legal framework would lead the East Europeans to change their behavior to that generally observed in Western democracies. In this sense, a free market – first and foremost – and democratic institutions constructed from above, were to act as the vehicles for social change (the transformation from communism to democracy).

But long after the collapse of communism, the rule of law in many instances remains arbitrary, sporadic, and politicized. In some cases, the rule of law is used as instrument by elites for their own purposes. In other words, law depends on the will of whoever is in power. When traveling in Eastern Europe, one may be surprised to find the same behavioral patterns that were common under communism. Abuse of the system and widespread corruption have become systemic. State elitism and paternalism, societal atomization, apathy, feelings of anomie, low efficacy, distrust of the political, and retreat to the private all seem to flourish.

Step by step, the public that began idealistically euphoric about democracy has become disillusioned with it as documented by numerous opinion polls in most East European countries. This frustration is reflected, for instance, in rising tides of intolerance towards minorities, anti-Semitism, and impatience with women's issues. This situation leads one to question the validity of the neo-liberal prescriptions for transformation and the capacity of the neo-liberal vision to deal now with these pertinent problems.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, there are some similarities between the new and the old system. Most notably, communist and postcommunist modes of appropriation have one important thing in common: the essence of such power is its nihilistic character, which can be defined as disrespect for, or indifference to, the notion of justice and the common good as defined in national or community terms. Conversely, the nihilistic core of this political economy is the will to cross the boundaries of the good or the permitted, including morality and positive law. Relative to earlier times, people are practically free to do this. To this effect, postcommunism has borrowed the language of democracy and capitalism as a legitimizing tool and as a model to imitate. Normally, the compound of capitalism and democracy is subsumed in the rather ambiguous notion of 'liberalism,' sometimes referred to as 'liberal democracy.' However, postcommunism has transformed the image of democracy, liberalism, and capitalism as hitherto known. Rather than validating the initial emancipatory ideals, postcommunism is increasingly gaining experience; and it reveals itself, as a process through which the 'uncanny' predicament of the West – that is,

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<sup>3</sup> We use the term "transformation" instead of a much more popular term "transition". The term "transition", used mostly by the neo-liberal reformers, refers to a linear process linking the communist past with the liberal market system at the end of this road. From our perspective, the term "transformation" better describes empirically the non-linear, more unpredictable, uncertain, and almost zig-zag socio-economic development in Eastern Europe.

political nihilism or the ‘everything is permitted’ mentality – asserts its dominance.

In postcommunism, such political nihilism thus reveals itself as a force that defines the essence of ‘postcommunist’ capitalism and liberalism. Capitalism is transformed into a system of complex symbiosis between nominally legal structures and ‘organized’ crime that becomes not only a systemic economic force but also a political actor in its own right. In the inter-penetration of the legal and the illegal, boundaries between what is possible and what is permitted are violated, profaned, or erased, and what is legal and what is illegitimate or illegal strangely reproduce, invert, and subvert each other. This new, altered form of liberalism may be dubbed ‘*lumpenliberalism*.’ Lumpenliberalism also frequently uses populist political methods in times of political campaigns only to forget the promises right after the elections. In this sense, as far as the main economic policies are concerned, there is not a very big gap between left and right in Eastern Europe.

One of the most interesting observations is that postcommunism feeds globalization which, in turn, is a frame that directs and controls postcommunism. In my view, what has been generally underestimated in this respect in recent debates is the impact of postcommunism itself on the process of globalization (read as: the response of the periphery to the structural problems of its center).<sup>4</sup> Postcommunism, unleashed, reflects on its core frame (i.e. the way in which the world economy is being globalized), and the ways the reconstituted frame (i.e., the globalizing world economy) shapes the path of postcommunism have to be negotiated. Therefore, while globalization – or, what some more skeptical observers call internationalization – is undoubtedly nothing new, the way it has been proceeding since the collapse of communism has posed new and important questions about its content, meaning, pace, and scope. My point is that globalization and postcommunism are mutual reflections – they reciprocally determine what they reflect. I argue that globalization and postcommunism can be observed and analyzed in terms of dialectical *mimesis* (mimicry or imitation) of each other. The particular character of this mimetic reflection is that it has the power to show or unveil what is elsewhere still obscured and undetermined.

This appears to be especially valid with regard to what postcommunism can tell us about the emerging nature of globalization. There problematic practices and experiences of postcommunism – such as large-scale economic and social dislocations, merciless monetarization of politics, having a criminalized society in place of ‘civil society’ and the rule of law, purposeful un-politization of society, and so on. These are not so

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<sup>4</sup> Unlike many authors we do not see globalisation as necessarily destructive. It can be evaluated as such only according to chosen criteria. For us, such fundamental criteria embrace market economy *cum* equitable democratic order, and the effective rule of democratic law.

much embarrassing ‘aberrations’ or ‘deviations’ from the “right” path of globalization (or “erroneous implementation” by the East Europe politicians, or as some say “history long degeneration”) as they are crude manifestations of emerging global trends. In this sense, the “really existing globalization” in Eastern Europe might mirror processes and structures in more industrialized countries.<sup>5</sup>

Admittedly, the postcommunist imitation of globalization is a radical reduction of the possible paths which globalization might take. This reduction also means a separation of both globalization and postcommunism from what is discarded through their development as spurious, unessential, inefficient, expandable, merely rhetorical, unprofitable, or false. As a result, the initially indeterminate and ambiguous nature of globalization (as well as of postcommunism itself) becomes more concrete and specific, and thus better defined. Eastern Europe is serving as a “large scale laboratory” to test medium-term globalization effects. Among the “test results” are: After ten years of transformation we are much better informed on how far one can push labour in depriving it of the benefits of the welfare state; on what the limits of pauperisation are before a large-scale social turmoil might erupt; on how effectively to manipulate “free media”; on the political and economic costs of dramatically undermining social cohesion are; on the different effects of globalization mediated by different cultures. These are some of the fundamental questions that managers of the capitalist project would like to have answered. Eastern Europe, accompanied by Latin America and Africa, is now able to collectively testify on these matters because postcommunism is ahead of the West in its experience of globalization. It is ahead in the sense that if the product is tested in the laboratory it takes some time for it to become shelved and commonly available.<sup>6</sup> Iraq is the first “manufactured product” of this new approach.

II. The second set of lessons came from the European Union and the international community. Most important – from the American point of view – is that “Decades of American nuclear reassurance induced unprecedented military dystrophy (...) The inability of the European Union to build a consensus on foreign policy, much less a force with which to implement it, has handed Washington a monopoly in the definition and

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<sup>5</sup> Term “really existing globalization” reflects, on the one hand, continuity with the “really existing socialism”, a term that was used to describe the system in the 1970s in Eastern Europe, and on the other, deviation from imagined results presented by the neo-liberal cohort both domestic and foreign at the beginning of the transformation.

<sup>6</sup> We are obviously aware that the impact of globalization is different in different states (Russia and Czech Republic) because of the different state capacity to introduce new policies and different social capacities to absorb and react to them. In this chapter, however, we are mostly interested in tracing commonalties in the region, rather than in underlining obvious differences.

resolution of international crises”.<sup>7</sup> In other words, Europe is militarily weak in comparison to the US (and the gap is still growing), but economically it is still rather strong. That set of conditions makes Europe prone to take different actions and develop different policies than the US. As one US policy advisor put it, “Europeans insist that they approach problems with greater nuance and sophistication. They try to influence others through subtlety and indirection. They are more tolerant of failure, more patient when solutions don’t come quickly. They generally favor peaceful response to problems, preferring negotiations, diplomacy, and persuasion to coercion. They are quicker to appeal to international law, international conventions, and international opinion to adjudicate disputes.”<sup>8</sup>

Even if this perception is a simplification of European behavior, the conclusions are firm: “The US and Europe are fundamentally different today (...) They agree on little and understand one another less and less. And this state of affairs is not transitory”. In other words, America is strong, Europe is weak. So, in the perception of the US there is a fundamental power problem. The gap will continue forcing the US to accept this division and act accordingly. “American military strength has produced a propensity to use that strength. Europe’s military weakness has produced (...) aversion to the exercise of military power”.<sup>9</sup>

The next group of lessons came from the international community as represented by the UN system. To summarize the US administration’s position on what they have learned from working with the UN, quoting Randy Scheunemann, former national security adviser to Senate majority leaders:

The UN’s sordid record on Iraq may be deplorable but not unique. Recall Haiti, where the UN’s failure in 1995 at holding elections resulted in political instability and despair. Nor is the record encouraging in Kosovo, essentially a protectorate under the UN since 1999 (...) The UN-crats demonstrate little familiarity with essential concepts such as private enterprise or private property. (...) The UN has not and can not learn the fundamental moral lesson of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is that amorality in the face of evil becomes immorality.<sup>10</sup>

There are other lessons that cumulatively produced the current response. Among the most important was September 11th and the “war on

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<sup>7</sup> Tony Judt, “The Way We Live Now”, *The NYR of Books* (March 27, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness”, *Policy Review* (No.113, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Randy Schuenemann, *Globe and Mail* (April 9, 2003).



terrorism". But there are other factors: the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, a relative shortage of oil, unprecedented growth of military technology, weakness of the stock market, weak corporate governance, inability to produce more wealth for US citizens in the last two years, and the fact that the capitalist system is becoming less profitable for the capitalists.<sup>11</sup>

What did America conclude from this learning process that took more than ten years? Domestically – if rightly justified – the US still can afford to increase defense spending and diminish welfare spending, as well as lower the real income of its population. It can also “Take away our rights and take away our freedom, take away our liberties” – as Senator John Edwards said recently to the Democratic National Committee.<sup>12</sup> Internationally, the US response has been to accept the use of force, to act unilaterally if necessary, to take preemptive action against its enemies, and make “regime changes” where US interests are jeopardized. They are ready to accept “their nation’s special role in the world”<sup>13</sup>. They understand by now the necessity to “live by a double standard” (both domestically and internationally). Intervening in Iraq and simultaneously supporting financially and militarily some clearly dictatorial regimes in Central Asia is just a sample. Double standard is coming to be a defensive mechanism and a norm, rather than an exception.

III. My third question is, if there is an “American Mission,” what would be its next logical step. My opinion is that what we see is still a work in progress. Several issues were discussed, policies were outlined and executed, like the defeat of the Taliban and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Others, both domestic and international, are far from being concluded and some are still in the early conceptual stages. International issues such as stabilization in Iraq, relations with Iran, North Korea, China and Russia, and reorganization of the UN are being discussed, but these are still to take a final shape. The development of the situation in Iraq is crucial for transforming the neoconservative ideas, as it will show the limits of the American military, the US financial power and ability to “go it alone” as well as to rule globally from a single political centre. Other important domestic issues for this administration, such as institutional reforms to reshape such pillars of the American bureaucracy as its Department of State, the FBI, the CIA and the Pentagon, are only in a conceptual stage.

IV. Most importantly, I argue that regardless of the powerful 9/11 experience that is not fully understood outside the US, the US, had to devise a meaningful response to deal with three main contradictions that started to undermine the very existence of the American system and its

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<sup>11</sup> This last point will require special but separate discussion.

<sup>12</sup> John Edwards (February 22).

<sup>13</sup> Robert Kagan, *ibid*, p.18

global position. The first contradiction exists between the American push for globalization and its highly protectionist domestic market policies. In other words, America can not strictly follow its own globalization blueprint which it is preaching to the world without jeopardizing its own economic growth. Thus, I argue that the “double standard” had to be introduced internationally and more systematically by the US. The second contradiction exists between the projected (or perceived) strength of the world’s largest economy and its real capacity. In other words, America’s productive capacity is diminishing in relative and absolute terms while the projected role of the US is growing. The third contradiction is that global prosperity and US prosperity requires a fairly stable international environment because it is heavily dependent on debt; while a legitimate “War on Terror” – in the narrow sense that terrorism really is one of the great dangers of our time – is globally destabilizing. The “Bush Doctrine” is a direct, fundamental – if not short-sighted – response to these contradictions faced by the US in institutional, ideological, security, and moral (good versus evil) terms. Subsequent US Presidents will have to deal with this set of questions.

The picture we see is the re-positioning of the US in the new role of a hegemon with its new mission and objectives. It may cause, in the long run, the dissolution of the international system as we know it. The core of that system was a web of institutions and norms that enabled mostly Western alliances to cooperate and engage in vast areas of economics and politics. Such an arrangement secured a high level of cooperation and stability among them. A set of interlocked institutions such as the UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, and the IMF were supported by a set of norms such as conventions on human rights, migration, refugees, arms control, war crimes, and many others that integrated the international community. All this is now in jeopardy. The obvious question follows: why did the Americans decide to start such a risky project?

To decipher the new American paradigm of international relations, we have to understand the two constantly present, main dilemmas of US relations with the outside world. They are located between two approaches. One is unilateralism versus multilateralism, that is to act mostly alone or in concert with others. The other is isolationism versus internationalism, that is, to stay out of world affairs, so the US would not have to depend on anyone or work in, or with, the world to protect US interests. The US decided to square the circle, using its current position as the most militarily and economically powerful country, by acting unilaterally. Tony Judt put it, “We do what we want in the world but on our terms, indifferent to the desires of others, when they don’t share our objectives”–but also “internationally” as most of the objectives of the US “mission” are located outside the US. Thus to achieve its “mission,” the US is believed to be forced to act as a “unilateralist internationalist” (T. Judt)

According to William Kristol and Lawrence Kaplan in the neo-conservatist corner of US policy circles, which include Paul Wolfowitz,

Richard Perle, Donald Rumsfeld, Zalmay Khalilzad, Richard Cheney, Elliot Abrams, Lewis Libby, Douglas Feith, the goal is to “secure its safety and to advance the cause of liberty”. American foreign policy must be “un-apologetic, idealistic, assertive, and well-funded. America must not only be the world’s policeman or its sheriff, it must be its beacon and guide.” This is very different from the Kissinger style-realpolitik or Clinton “containment” approach, but it is close to Ronald Reagan’s vision of the need to fight an “evil empire.” This time the “evil” is located everywhere, where the US sees it within the very elastic framework of the “war against terrorism,” the fight with the “axis of evil,” “regime change” concept, and the doctrine of “preemptive” US action. If we skip the jargon, what is left is the simple but *imperial* or *hegemonic* vision of the need to defend American interest as defined by the US administration in order to, according to the 1992 Defense Planning Guidelines “prevent the re-emergence of a new rival. This is a dominant consideration ...and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region, whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. These regions include Western Europe, East Asia, the territory of the former Soviet Union, and South East Asia”. As Robert Kagan remarked, “Americans prefer to act with sanction and support of other countries if they can. But they are strong enough to act alone if they must (...); in an age of American hegemony, it will be multilateralism, American style”.<sup>14</sup>

V. What next? The fifth argument that forms a conclusion of this comparative analysis of the international behavior of the US during the Reagan and Bush administrations is as follows: First, those unilateral policies cannot be sustained. Second, there is a growing realization in the White House of the need to find more meaningful allies even if that means the re-alignment of the current policies. Third, there is already a slow but confident process of realignment to a more multilateral approach that will include the UN (in dealing with Iraq), NATO (in the framework of the NATO Response Force/International Security Assistance Force), the Middle East (within the framework of the Greater Middle East Initiative), Russia (within the framework of the G-8) and the EU (within the framework of the Proliferation Security Initiative/“Effective multilateralism”). Fourth, what was initiated as a radical change, as we can see, became self-defeating and even created a more unstable and dangerous environment – this dynamic creates a pre-condition to the policy change by the US during subsequent administrations.

What made this historical change possible is that behind the new doctrine there is quite a long learning process and several key turning points shaped it, consolidated it, and enabled the US Administration to act with

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Kagan, *Multilateralism, American Style* (The Washington Post, 13 September, 2002).

very significant public support. The Berlin Wall had to collapse, Kosovo had to be bombed, al-Queda had to fly airplanes into the WTC, the US economy had to contract a flu, and a new US President had to find his mission before missiles had to land in Baghdad, and the new doctrine could be fine-tuned and imposed on the international community.

**CHAPTER VI**

**POLITICAL CULTURE AND POLITICAL  
POWER IN THE EPOCH OF GLOBALIZATION**

*VLADIMIR A. GUTOROV*

The aim of this paper is quite modest. The topic to be discussed can be exhausted only by the purposeful activity of many scholars adhering to different trends in modern social science. There is no deficiency of prognoses concerning the perspectives of evolution of political systems at both the regional and world levels. Such prognoses are founded, as a rule, on analysis of the deep-rooted conflicts which are characteristic of such well-developed countries as the USA, EU and Japan, as well as the countries representing either the post-communist region or another type of civilization, for instance, the Islamic world. The works of S. Huntington and I. Wallerstein like the discussion that arose around them testify to a definite degree how far the social sciences have advanced in this direction. There is no reason, of course, to go into the details of these disputes in so far as many details, by all their variety, can hardly be regarded as definitively clear and comprehensive. Therefore, I would restrict myself to the following questions which are very important by themselves: a) in what measure can the global trends in the transformation of political power influence their theoretical reflection in political theory? and b) do we need to include in this reflection an ethical component?

It may look strange, but the last question can get the most consideration. We live in an epoch when pessimism often seems to be the best medicine against self-deception, and sound judgement is paramount. No prophecies about the coming of a new era of globalization, which brings a radical revision of traditional notions of state, power, culture and human rights, can be taken into consideration without preliminary scientific investigation. “The most fundamental element of pessimism, – as George Sorel wrote in his letter to Daniel Halevy – is its method of conceiving the paths toward deliverance”.<sup>1</sup> Observing the wonderful indifference with which the majority of Europeans and the Russians watched the dramatic events in the Near East, one attempts against his own will to console himself with the argument that such a state is quite ordinary for the human race and has been reproduced many times in history. An example is the description by Titus Livius of negotiations between Perseus, the king of

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<sup>1</sup> Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*. Transl. by T. E. Hulme and J. Roth with an introduction by Edward A. Shils (New York, 1967), p. 34.

Macedonia and Quintus Marcius, the Roman consul in 171 B.C.: “A few days later they met at the spot agreed upon. The royal retinue was large, a crowd both of friends and attendants, thronging about him. With no less a train came the envoys, for many escorted them from Larisa, besides the embassies of certain cities which had assembled at Larisa and wanted to report home facts which they had heard. There was a desire, natural to mankind, to see the meeting of a famous king and the envoys of the people for most in the whole world” (XLII 39, 1-3).<sup>2</sup>

In my student years, when I read these lines of the famous Roman historian, I was seized by a sarcastic feeling which sprang from what I knew beforehand – in three years not only would the cruel tyrant perish but the curious philistines would also become for many centuries miserable vassals of “the people for most in the whole world”. Today these lines are perceived differently and one can easily come to the following conclusion: this time the tale is narrated about you, *de te fabula narratur*.

It is pleasant, of course, to calm oneself with melancholic passages borrowed from O. Spengler – “in a few centuries there will be no European culture, no Germans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, as in the time of Justinian there were no Romans”.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that Spengler is right. But one can be quite sure that peoples which are merely indifferent risk disappearing much earlier than do peoples pretending to play the role of leaders in the modern world.

Nevertheless, one must admit also that such “coup de theater” was foreseen long ago in social theory. For instance, I. Wallerstein in one of his essays of the second half of the 90s “Peace, Stability and Legitimacy. 1990–2025/2050,” characterizing a perspective of possible wars and conflicts between the United States, Japan and Western Europe, tried even to formulate the following specific law by using an analogy with the war between Iraq and Iran, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, in the Caucasus etc.: the indifference of public opinion in the developed industrial countries will grow in direct proportion to the intensification of conflicts in the southern regions.<sup>4</sup>

Such an indifference of both Western and Russian political communities – the majority of the European governments included – needs to be explained because of the recent mood of resignation in Russia and the West. The reaction of the governments of France and Germany to the anti-

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<sup>2</sup> Livy. With an English translation by Evan T. Sage and Alfred C. Schlesinger. T. 12, 1938, p. 407 (Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>3</sup> Oswald Spengler, *Zakat Evropi* (The Decline of the West). V.1 (Moscow: Misl, 1993), p. 329.

<sup>4</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *Analiz mirovih sistem i situatsiy v sovremennom mire* (The Analysis of the World Systems and the Situation in the Modern World) (Saint-Petersburg, 2001), p. 367.

terrorist operation of the USA and Great Britain against Iraq is a rare and transitory exception. This indifference is too real a component of modern political culture because of its striking contrast with numerous manifestations of the Islamic fanaticism in the epoch of globalization.

There is no need to fix special attention on the definition of globalization. One can adopt a broad definition such as “the development of the world in the form of a united or... single space, the movement to such a united world as a process which began in the early stages of history and now becomes almost inevitable”.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the notion of modernity, which is broadly discussed now in scientific literature, resists the notion of globalization in the conceptual sense; of course, at times the former looks like an antipode to the latter.

In the context of the relation of political culture and political power the notion of modernity was certainly connected with a deep cultural upheaval on the borders of the 18th–19th centuries, when under the influence of the French revolution, a series of “definitely new institutional projects symbolizing the modern world as such” had arisen.<sup>6</sup> In opposition to the natural economy and mercantilistic system, a new market economy developed. In the political sphere the constitutional ideal of “the republic of citizens”, leaning upon the conception of the “Nation-State” and the people’s sovereignty was opposed to absolutist monarchy. What is in question, therefore, is the democratic revolution which has been developing for more than two centuries. During this period the democratic tradition itself underwent considerable modifications by overcoming in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the resistance of the remnants of feudalism. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it engaged totalitarianism in mortal struggle and conquered it by the end of the World War II. Thereby democracy strengthened its liberal and egalitarian foundations for the modern era. By the latter I imply the spread of political and civil rights to the majority of the population of the Western world, the recognition of the rights of trade-unions and socialist parties as equal partners of traditional political parties, the increased role of state planning, the development of social programs within the frame of both the welfare and the social state, etc.

Formerly, the popular theory was convergence, one of the main objectives of which was the acknowledgement of the model of Western liberal democracy as a standard of the universal historical process. I join those scholars who consider it more natural to speak about a “plurality of

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<sup>5</sup> Marat A. Cheshkov, *Globalny kontekst postsovetsoi Rossii. Ocherk teorii i metodologii mirotselostnosti* (The Global Context of Post-Soviet Russia. An Essay on Theory and Methodology of the World Unity) (Moscow, 1999), p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Bjorn Wittrock, “Modernity: One, None or Many? European Origins and Modernity as a Global Condition”, *Daedalus* (2000, Vol. 129, No. 1), p. 151.

modernities”,<sup>7</sup> taking into consideration not only the increasing difference between the West and the Islamic world, but also the preservation of deep-rooted specific characteristics in the development of Japan and, especially, of China.

One could approach analogously the political processes in the post-communist societies on the whole and post-communist Russia in particular. As S.N. Eisenstadt has outlined, in Western Europe, the succession of cultural orientations promoted a variety of new, relatively autonomous institutes and groups with corresponding models of comparatively easy control. However in Russia as well as in China the destruction by revolutionary elites of a large part of the symbols, structures, social classes and organizations of traditional society did not change the old authoritarian orientations which were characteristic of the former empire. Thus both personal and internal group identities were reduced to a minimum.<sup>8</sup>

But the authoritarian tendencies manifested so distinctively in the demeanour of political elites in Central and Eastern Europe during the “velvet revolutions” gradually declined, although they have not disappeared. Nobody can say now (as I shall try to show later on) that authoritarianism in modern Russia has decreased in some way and that any real evolution in the direction of liberal democratic regime is manifest.

In either case, a “plurality of modernities” corresponds more to the special features of our epoch which S. Huntington prefers to define as a “clash of civilizations”. It is interesting that Huntington sees the main characteristic of the international order, formed after World War II as the new phenomenon of multipolarity when for the modern epoch, beginning in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, multipolarity has been exhausted completely by interrelation and conflicts between the main actors in the Western civilization. Today global politics, for the first time in history, has begun simultaneously to take into consideration the interrelation of many civilizations.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the main tendencies of such interaction are regarded by Huntington mainly in terms of increase of conflicts with all their regressive consequences. These consequences are visible in the evident contradiction between traditional understanding of world politics as a sphere of struggle and rivalry between coalitions of national states and those international groups typical of the epoch of impetuous development of mass communications and new industrial and information technologies.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Revolitsia i preobrasovanie obshestv: sravnitelnoe issledovanie tsivilizatsiy* (Revolution and the Transformation of Societies. A Comparative Study of Civilizations) (Moscow: Aspect Press, 1999), pp. 290–291.

<sup>9</sup> See: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York, 1996), pp. 21, 28–29, 183–186.



The immediate result of this process became the deepening of division between the West and “the rest”.<sup>10</sup>

After the ruin of the communist system the crisis of the universal liberal model of the new world order followed.<sup>11</sup> In this connection S. Huntington has appropriately noted that the attempts of the West to preserve its leadership position and save its own interests by representing them in the form of interests of the “world community” will make more evident the gap already existing between the declared principles of the West and the real actions of the latter. The price of these universal pretences is hypocrisy and double moral standards.<sup>12</sup>

The tendencies mentioned above can be considered as initial premises for an investigation of political culture and political power in the frame of the new turn to globalization. There is no need of a special analysis of various conceptions of political power in modern scientific literature. Strictly speaking, only one question must be elucidated – whether any modification of what is usually defined as antinomy or rather dichotomy of power arises under the influence of globalization. The examination of this question provides an opportunity to analyze also the tendency connected with a systematic use of quite traditional and very archaic methods in the sphere of international relations by modern states identifying themselves with liberal democracies.

However, even in the early stage of scientific investigation into the phenomenon of power, Ch. Merriam described very well the above mentioned dichotomy in the fifth chapter of his famous book *Political Power* entitled expressively “The shame of power”: side by side with those elements of power which deserve trust and admiration (*credenda* and *miranda*):

We may look now at power from beneath, at the incidence of power from the point of view of those upon whom power is exercised. We may note:

1. Violence, cruelty, terror, arrogance.
2. Hypocrisy, deceit, intrigue.
3. Corruption and privilege.
4. Inflexibility, stubbornness.
5. Backwardness, tardy adaptation to progress.
6. Indecision, impotence.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-218 and passim.

<sup>13</sup> Charles E. Merriam, *Political Power* (New York, 1964), p. 136.

It is important to stress that one of the main attributes of a strictly scientific definition consists in its universal character. When this attribute is applied to making more precise the notion of political power, the following conclusion becomes clear: today the contradiction between two different and quite traditional approaches acquires unusual intensity and acuity. In particular, many liberal conceptions elaborated during the last 50-60 years can hardly sustain criticism just from the point of their universal applicability. For example, the theory of H. Arendt, who identified power with “the space of freedom,” has a deep-rooted connection with the tradition of European liberal thought which now experiences the next very painful crisis. On the contrary, the military actions of the United States and its European allies against Serbia in the end of the 90s and the war against Iraq, by provoking a crisis of the international world order which was formed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have attached new importance to the criticism of liberal political theory by H. Morgenthau. “Thucydides, Machiavelli, Richelieu, Hamilton, or Disraeli,” – he wrote in his brilliant pamphlet “Scientific Man versus Power Politics“,

would conceive the nature of international politics as an unending struggle for survival and power. It is true that, even before modern international thought entered the field, this conception of international affairs was under constant attack. From the Church Fathers to the anti-Machiavellian writers of the eighteenth century, international politics was made the object of moral condemnation. But modern international thought goes further. It denies not only the moral value of political power which proves nothing as over against the rational values of truth and justice; it denies, if not the very existence of power politics as a matter of fact, at least its organic and inevitable connection with the life of man in society. Francis Bacon only prophesied that the empire of man over nature would replace the empire of man over man. For the leading international thought of the nineteenth century, this prophecy had come true... There is no violence in a rational system of society. It is therefore a vital – practical as well as intellectual – concern of the middle class to avoid outside interference, especially violent interference, with the delicate mechanics of the social and economic system, which stands for the rationality of the world at large. By elevating this concern to a philosophical and political postulate of absolute validity, liberalism overlooked the singularity as well as the exceptional character of the experience in which it originated. For the absence of organized violence during long periods of

history is, in domestic no less than in international relations, the exception rather than the rule.<sup>14</sup>

In general, the main reason for the revival of such a criticism is not globalization as such, but rather the concomitant tendency of transformation of the international world order from the former bipolar to a unipolar order. In the beginning of the 1960s H. Marcuse, the outstanding left-radical thinker, appraising the special features of a bipolar world, wrote in the introduction to his famous book *One-Dimensional Man*:

Does not the threat of an atomic catastrophe which could wipe out the human race also serve to protect the very forces which perpetuate this danger? The efforts to prevent such a catastrophe overshadow the search for its potential causes in contemporary industrial society. These causes remain unidentified, unexposed, unattacked by the public because they recede before the all too obvious threat from the without – to the West from the East, to the East from the West. Equally obvious is the need for being prepared, for living on the brink, for facing the challenge. We submit to the peaceful production of the means of destruction, to the perfection of waste, to being educated for a defense which deforms the defenders and that which they defend. If we attempt to relate the causes of the danger to the way in which society is organized and organizes its members, we are immediately confronted with the fact that advanced industrial society becomes richer, bigger, and better as it perpetuates the danger.<sup>15</sup>

Today, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, we can definitely suppose that the danger outlined by Marcuse is not diminished. Not by chance, A. Giddens compared the modern global system with a rag blanket, distinguishing the absence of balance between poverty and wealth as similar to the lack of both political integration and consensus among nations and regions as main sources of the increase of international tensions.<sup>16</sup>

At all events, the specific character of a new world order influences the transformation of both political power and culture in the direction of their uniformity in different regions, primarily in the West and in the post-communist countries.

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<sup>14</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau. *Morgenthau Scientific Man versus Power Politics* (Chicago & London, 1967), pp. 42-43, 49.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964), p. IX.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Giddens. *Sociology* (The Russian ed.) (Moscow, 1999), p. 513.

State planning was one of the most important special features of historical development after World War II. The formation of the state was inseparable from the growth of bureaucratic structures as well as new manipulative technologies. The latter were, in their turn, closely connected with the swift development of the mass-media and the other instruments of political communication. All these tendencies had been analyzed already in the 1960s by the scholars representing sometimes the extreme points of the ideological spectrum of the West. In particular, J. Ellul, who represented the conservative trend, defended the ideas which seem now to be in full contrast to the conceptions of neo-conservative thinkers of the 1980s and 1990s:

The modern state could no more be a state without technology than a businessman could be a businessman without the telephone or the automobile. The businessman does not employ these objects because he is particularly enamored of progress. The state does not employ propaganda or planning because it is socialist. The circumstances are such that the state cannot be other than it is. Not only does it need technologies, but technologies need it. It is not a matter of chance, nor a matter of conscious will; rather, it is an urgency which expresses itself in the growth of the technical apparatus around a rather slight and feeble "brain". The motive force behind the state does not develop in proportion to the state apparatus. The motive force (theological interpretation aside) is man. And man has no more capacity to function when he is at the center of technical organization than when he is a simple citizen lost in the machinery. In other words, the politician is demoted to minority status by the enormity of the technologies the state has at its disposal. The state is no longer the President of the Republic plus one or more Chambers of Deputies. Nor is it a dictator with certain all-powerful ministers. It is an organization of increasing complexity which puts to work the sum of the technologies of the modern world.<sup>17</sup>

H. Marcuse, in his turn, insisted on the thesis that the Western socio-political system is moving from traditional pluralism to the formation of the "one-dimensional society" because of a combination of the manageable character of modern economics and the growth of bureaucracy at all levels. The leading tendency of Western political culture consists of

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<sup>17</sup> Jacques Ellul. *The Technological Society*. With an introduction by Robert K. Merton (New York, 1964), pp. 253-254.

its “depolitization,” i.e. eradication of both political and moral questions from social life as a result of being possessed by technique, productivity and effectiveness. “Instrumental reason,” as a by-product of depolitization, is secured by the influence of the mass-media on the cultural traditions of the lowest social classes, regional and national minorities which are driven to the Procrustean couch of the “packed culture” by informative cajoling. It is implied that the mass-media become also the instrument of the advertising industry which is aimed at unrestrained increase of consumption. The final result of these processes is the rise of “false consciousness,” i.e. a definite psychological state in which man ceases to understand his own interests because the world of bureaucracy corrupts and perverts human life. But, in spite of the fact that social order becomes repressive and unworthy in the framework of close interaction between state and industry, the majority of people prefers to reconcile itself to such a condition. Being pierced by conformism the people’s conduct becomes passive. Men are deprived of choice over what kind of production is preferable or the form of democracy in which they want to participate. If they aspire to security and comfort, they must accommodate themselves to the standards of existing economic and political systems under fear of being marginalized. Therefore, the idea of the power of people is found to be a myth.<sup>18</sup>

“Political freedom”, he concluded, “would mean liberation of the individuals from the politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of ‘public opinion’ together with its makers. The unrealistic sound of these propositions is indicative, not of their utopian character, but of the strength of the forces which prevent their realization”.<sup>19</sup>

It now seems not so strange why critical passages like these, created more than fifty years ago, have become quite in harmony with the political processes which developed both in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the beginning of the 1990s and in modern Russia. We shall not go into details of questions connected with methodological approaches or the choice of critical theories, which are suitable for analyzing the complicated reality of post-communist world. But one can distinguish in conclusion the main line leading to the possibility of drawing parallels between the post-communist countries and the United States which H. Lasswell defined in the 50s as a “highly manipulated society”; it is the over ideologization of both the political process and the discourse

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<sup>18</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *op. cit.* Ch. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

expressing the basic orientations of the new political elites. For example, the strategy of confirming the new political discourse by new elites in Central and Eastern Europe was well analyzed by Hungarian scholars, G. Konrad and I. Szelényi, in the book *Intellectuals and Domination in Post-Communist Societies*. In particular, by answering the question of the positional force hidden behind the victory in the sphere of the freedom of speech, they formulated the following thesis: the intellectuals of the first wave of the “velvet revolutions” did not primarily aspire to occupy the places of a new bureaucracy or new bourgeoisie, but to the role of “ideological project-makers” The image of this extraordinary role was founded on the illusion that post-communist power was “bistructural” and that both bureaucracy and the new bourgeoisie would carry on a play with each other, while the intellectuals could occupy the place of “supreme arbiters” as in sport matches. The main instrument of attaining this role is the monopolization of social discourse, above all, the structure of political language which would permit defining the political agenda of the future. Meanwhile, the intellectuals become “mediocrats,” by acquiring a corresponding political influence and preparing the position of “politocrats” for themselves. Of course, such an orientation could only be authoritarian, hidden behind democratic rhetoric.<sup>20</sup>

The main aspect of various interpretations of the modern Russian political culture proposed by both domestic and foreign specialists is defined, as a rule, by the character of the Russian new corporative politics. For example, R. Sakwa in his description of the Russian political landscape prefers the notion “regime democracy”. He puts forward the idea that

Russia has undergone an incomplete revolution: the structure of power has changed its forms, but the traditional subordination of the political process to the ruling elites has taken on new forms. Property relations are being transformed, but polity and economy remain undifferentiated. The ruling class by and large remains in place deprived only of the top echelon of the political system. Incomplete democratization gave rise to a hybrid system combining both democracy and authoritarianism.<sup>21</sup>

The Russian regime is based on a distinctive and unstable alliance. Dominated by a section of the bureaucracy that had matured for reform, its ideological program came from liberal Westernizers, while fragmented democratic movements acted largely as auxiliaries. The regime failed to

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<sup>20</sup> György Konrad and Ivan Szelényi, “Intellectuals and Domination in Post-Communist Societies”, *Social Theory for Changing Society*. Ed. by P. Bourdieu & J.S. Coleman. Boulder. 1991, pp. 337-361.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Sakwa, “The Regime System in Russia”, *Contemporary Politics* (1997), Vol. 3, No 1, p. 7.

institutionalize either the political influence of social movements through party forms of representative government, or its own responsibility to society through a legislature – or, through the whole network of communicative agencies like the media and the other elements of a pluralistic civil society.<sup>22</sup>

When avoiding the extremes which often accompany the analysis of the political process in modern Russia (as well as in post-communist regions, in general), one can recognize the common trends in the evolution of the political culture which reflect in some way the influence of the idea of globalization on domestic elites. By adopting the concept of the rapid liberalization of the economy and of the political system in the frame of a new version of “pursuing modernization,” the post-communist political leaders (especially in Russia) lost the advantages – that is, the support of the strong state for overcoming various difficulties of the transitional period. “Democracy is never without its coercive features: the necessary condition for the functionality of a democratic state is a strong and authoritative government, able to act not only as the umpire between various interests but also with the authority to impose its policies on social groups and economic interests”.<sup>23</sup> But, while the post-communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe could ultimately compensate for the lack of democratic traditions by integrating into structures of the European Union, Russia, on the contrary, was found to be doomed to a mere imitation of corresponding Western liberal specimens because of the destruction of its own natural conservative base, namely, the traditions of a centralized system of government. The only form of compensation has become the utmost politicizing of social life reduced to endless flows of TV propaganda which the politicians of the “new wave” pour down periodically on a population steeped in the depths of the sharpest economic crisis.

Undoubtedly, globalization strains the old traditional dilemmas of unity and diversity, universality and particularization, world and nation, cosmopolitanism and citizenship. All these antinomies have both political and cultural dimensions. Discussing them often means making a moral choice. The difficulties of transition to democracy in modern Russia demonstrate quite visibly that globalization can not always be equal to Westernization by stimulating simultaneously the need to seek a national identity. In just this way globalization as value can be organically united with the value of diversity, creating strong obstacles to the transformation of the latter to a sterile nationalism and xenophobic policy.

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.





## **PART II**

### **RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY: DIVERSITY IN UNITY**



## CHAPTER VII

# RETHINKING RUSSIA

MIKHAIL MASLIN

By calling compatriots to study seriously their own country, comprehend the soul of the people with all its light and dark sides, and regarding this as an important religious and moral duty, N. V. Gogol came to the sad conclusion: “How deep is the ignorance of Russia in Russia”.

It may seem strange that this pronouncement by the author of *Dead Souls* rang in the golden period of Russian culture, when it began to gain an all-European importance, and could be regarded as an embodiment, in the words of Konstantin Leontiev, of a “flourishing complexity”. In the Gogol period of Russian literature – 1830s-1850s – there were great achievements not only for Russia but also for Europe and the world. It was a period when national self-consciousness was on the rise; it was the time of T. Granovsky and N. Stankevich, P. Chaadaev and A. Khomiakov, V. Belinsky and A. Herzen, M. Petrushevsky and F. Dostoevsky, I. Kireyevsky and O. Odoevsky and many others.

During that period the social thought of Russia was developing in two major directions – the Slavophiles and the Westerners. There was a sharp dispute among them, but it had not degenerated into uncompromising sectarian infighting oriented towards the destruction of the opponent in order to prove one’s path the straight and correct one. Although the Slavophiles (I. Kireyevsky, A. Khomyakov, K. and I. Aksakov and others) were trying to take account of the European experience, both sides ardently craved a flourishing Russia and to their best ability tried to accomplish that noble aim. P. Annenkov, an active participant in those philosophical disputes, in his “Literary Reminiscences” called the dispute between the Slavophiles and the Westerners a “dispute of two different types of one and the same Russian patriotism”. “Westerners, irrespective of what is said about them – he underscored – never rejected the historical conditions which give specific character to the civilization of each people, while Slavophiles were wrongly accused of being in favour of promoting static forms for the mind, science and arts”. In those days, there was no division between Russian and European, as one’s “Own” and the “Other”. It was not by chance that the Slavophile, A. Khomyakov, referred to Europe as the “land of holy wonders”, nor was the love and respect shown by his student I. Kireyevsky – the “Muscovite European” – to the German philosopher, Schelling, strange.

The awakening and rise of Russian national self-consciousness, enriched by the latest European ideas, gave birth to the Decembrists and the phenomenon of Chaadaev, the Slavophiles and the Westerners, Belinsky and the “Russian socialism” of Herzen, and other phenomena of social thought.

The greatest achievements of European thought – from French socialism to German philosophy – began to be assimilated into the “melting-pot” of the Russian national culture during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Feuerbach and the early Marx were “discovered” for the first time by the Russian educated gentry as early as the end of the 1840s.

What then is at the root of Gogol’s anxiety about the “ignorance of Russia” at the very time when it seemed that Russia excellently understood itself and at the same time organically joined the all-European cultural landscape? Is there some secret meaning in Gogol’s statement? Apparently not. The situation of Russian studies was seriously mapped out by him and without any hidden irony. If there was any irony, it could have been only in the fate of the *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, his will to posterity, which contained the anxiety of Gogol. This exactly confirmed the thesis of the great writer of the “ignorance about Russia”. Indeed, the will of Gogol was introduced to the reading public of Russia not by Gogol himself, but mainly by the critical review of Belinsky (*Letter to N. V. Gogol*, 1847).<sup>1</sup> For a long time this review was circulated in manuscript, and it became the belief symbol of the Russian left-radical intellectuals, beginning with Petrushevskiy and on to Plekhanov and Lenin. The issue here is not who of the two was right: Belinsky, the democrat who desired radical social transformations or Gogol, the conservative, who defended religion and culture, since each of these two had their own importance. As it were, the truth lies mostly not in the “edges”, but in the middle. Comprehending this was immensely difficult for Russia. It is pertinent to recall here the “separate (personal) opinion” of Alexander Blok about the fate of Russia and the Revolution in 1918. According to Blok, Gogol’s will (and book) was dictated not only by the “seduction of Orthodoxy, disease and the fear of death” but “by the genius of Gogol.... We once again stand in front of this book: it will shortly go into life and practice” (Blok A. A. *Collected Works*, in 8 volumes. M-L., Vol. 6. P. 26).

The actual history of all Russian culture is, to a large extent, a history of loss and of subsequent attempts to regain what was lost. Such was the case after the invasion of the Hordes. In Russia, there were periods of violent rupture of cultural continuity, and “leaps” to Europe as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when, according to the famous historian, Vasily Kluichevsky, “nearly within one century [Russia] moved from the *Domstroi* of the priest Silvester to the Encyclopedia of Diderot and De’Alambert”. No less stunning a transformation of peoples’ consciousness took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the transition from massive religiosity to massive atheism. Such gigantic zigzags complicate the sketching of the “middle line” in evaluating Russian history and thought. The current social crisis in Russia with its polarization of views, which some historians and publicists conceive as

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<sup>1</sup> The Letter was written by Belinsky in 1847, but was not published until 1872. – *Ed.*

stimuli for turning past history into the raw material for the production of various historical models, has a similarly complicating effect. The authors of these politicized newspaper “histories” of Russia propose to those who disagree with their models in the manner of Saltykov-Shchedrin to “find and throw them from the top of the Church bells”. In reality those models are so artificial that it would hardly disturb their authors to heed Gogol’s advice – first of all “to travel throughout Russia” before writing anything about her.

It appears that this simple but highly instructive thought-will of Gogol, which is very important also for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, lies in the fact that information about Russia, as a rule, was drawn “second hand”, selectively – and thus was incomplete and tendentious, while it should have been drawn “first hand”, without amendments or deletions. That is why he called for the study of Russia not from hearsay, but thoroughly and seriously.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century contributed very difficult, consequential and unprecedented breaks, beginnings and falls, negations and losses to the Russian historical process. At the epicentre of two World Wars and Revolutions, in the midst of demographic and ecological catastrophes, and experiencing a heavy totalitarian yoke, Russia was drawn by history into a grand, cruel and protracted survival experiment.

After the October Revolution the “horizontal links” of Russian culture with European education, the synthesis of Russian spirit and European intellect, which was fruitful for the national culture in the 19th century, was, to a large extent, lost. At the same time, at certain periods a negative attitude to Russian culture as something second class and thereby subject to reform was grafted onto society. This undermined the spiritual roots and degraded the national culture. This was clearly fixed in language which is the best expression of the health or illness of the social consciousness.

Even in the contemporary lexicon, Russian is not infrequently connected to something beyond the a-national, with no national meaning. The Soviet imperial press was exceptionally heavy upon Russian philosophy. The only Chair for Russian philosophy in Moscow State University after 1943 was renamed in 1955 as the Chair of the history of philosophy of the peoples of the USSR. The courses of the Chair included the history of philosophical thought of Transcaucasia, Central Asia, Baltic, the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldavia. However, attempts to create an “international” history of philosophy of the peoples of the USSR under the patronage of party organs and the USSR Academy of Sciences were far less fruitful for Russian philosophy as such. The five volume “*History of Philosophy in USSR*” (1968-1985),<sup>2</sup> known by students as the “blue bird”, reflected the dominant politics of “double standards” in relation to the

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<sup>2</sup> Is it not symbolic that the last volume saw light in the same year that Gorbachev came to power! – *Ed.*

philosophical heritage of the Russian and other peoples of the USSR. Demonstration of diverse “national” philosophical ideas was based on their extended interpretation, so that the national elite of the Union and Autonomous Republics were able to legitimize religious, socio-political, literary and even mythological, including oral, sources as philosophical. At that, only the non-Russian peoples of the USSR got those rights.

In this way, the ideas of Russian philosophy were used for constructing an “artificial international” philosophy of the USSR peoples, which paid high dividends to the non-Russian national elite, and later to the ethnocracy of most post-Soviet states. The “Soviet Empire” seems to have been a very peculiar system in many ways such as the development of the national cultures of non-Russian peoples. It was more beneficent to the latter than to the Russian Federation. The policy of supporting non-Russian “national cadres” in the USSR also enabled them to join without examinations the best universities and to have easy access to post-graduate studies.

In the Soviet period the classification of different trends in Russian philosophy was not based on their philosophical values, but instead on class and ideological criteria. Here, the partisan (party) norms were exceptionally acute. Accordingly, the “gentry”, “bourgeois” “liberal”, “revolutionary-democrat” – built upon socio-political ideas and doctrines – were regarded as in permanent struggle in which the “socio-class” principles were always victorious over the “philosophical”. To all practical purposes, the question of the national unity of Russian philosophy was eliminated – it was seen not as a single canvas but as a surrealist collection of different fragments, a linen divided into parts painted in contrasting, non-corresponding colors. More realistically it had the form of an optimistic canvas serving as an illustration of the victory of the “army of progress” against the “army of regress”.

In this sense, at first gaze a paradoxical situation arose in the Soviet period, but in reality it was inevitable. In studying certain schools of Russian thought (for example religious thought), Russian scholars lagged behind their Western colleagues. Essentially, Russian studies were practically neglected. Unlike in the USA and in Europe, there were no pedagogical or research “Russian centers” in Russia itself.

True, Western schools and centres of Russian studies were formed to a large extent by the active participation of leading Russian intellectuals-immigrants of the “first wave”: philosophers – N. Berdiayev, I. Ilyin, N. Losskii, S. Frank; theologians – V. Zenkovskii, G. Florovskii; and historians – G. Vernadskii, A. Lobanov-Rostovkii, V. Ryzanovskii, G. Fedotov, M. Florinskii and others. However, most of their studies were prohibited in the USSR.

It is gratifying to note that Polish scholars greatly contributed to the modern historiography of Russian philosophy. The studies of Anzhei Walitskii on Slavophiles, *narodnijestvo* and philosophy of law in Russia are well known in Russia. It is important to underscore the wonderful studies

carried out on the Russian Mentality at the interdisciplinary center of sovietological studies of Łodz University, including the four volume Russian-Polish-English lexicon edited by A. de Lazari (V. 1, Warsaw, 1999; V.2, Łodz, 1999; V. 3, Łodz, 2000; V. 4, Łodz, 2001). A Dictionary (Katowitze, 1995) was also edited by A. de Lazari. One can add also the publications in Russian by Marian Broda: "How to Grasp Russia?" (M., 1998) and "Problems with Leontiev" (M., 2001).

The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has witnessed an insatiable interest in the history of Russian philosophy by both older and young generations. The dogmatic Soviet canons were discarded, and new trends became popular, such as hermeneutics and phenomenology (G. Shpet), Russian cosmism, M. Bakhtin's philosophy of culture, the Sophy idealism of A. Losev, and many other themes.

In the post-Soviet period the language of philosophical culture has immensely changed. This is expressed in the lexicon of Russian philosophy. In this situation it is crucial to have an authentic perception of the specificity of the concepts of Russian philosophy, highlight its main historical development and themes, demonstrate the specific perceptions of classical Western philosophical systems, and analyze the major tendencies in the historiography of Russian philosophy. All these were in the main accomplished with the publication of the "Russian Philosophy Dictionary" (M., 1995, 1999) edited by this author. This publication was warmly welcomed in Russia and abroad in Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, etc. Following that dictionary, scholars of the Moscow State University published a new textbook, "History of Russian philosophy" (M., 2001), for students of the humanities. It is by far the most complete exposition of the philosophical views of Russian thinkers from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

Russian society is in the midst of a systematic crisis and in accordance with the synergetic approach it is in its bifurcation period when the dynamics of the system are abrupt and cannot be forecast. In such periods what V. Zenkovskii has defined as "active concentration on itself", i.e. know thyself, is necessary for Russia. Apparently, the real way to self-knowledge is through penetration of the heart of hearts of the Russian people through self-comprehension of the peculiarity of their history and culture, i.e. everything we call by the term, the Russian Idea.

The essential patterns of the Russia Idea were not given once and for all, but were formed in the process of centuries-old people's creativity; as defined by I. Ilyin "the age of the Russian Idea is the age of Russia herself."

However, nowadays one can observe that the development of the people's self-consciousness is in deep crisis. Nihilism is widespread among society, and people are losing pride and faith in their country and its history. Moral norms and the feeling of responsibility towards the homeland are eroding. No wonder then, that a heated debate is going on about the Russian Idea, which has become a problem of national being, and of the national spirit and fate.

Underestimation of the national factor was characteristic also before the October epoch. For example, comprehension of the world significance of ancient Russian painting came to Russia so late – only at the beginning of the 20th century. An invaluable role in opening to the world, the ancient icon painting as an important source for recognizing the internal spiritual constitution of Russia was played by the studies of E. Troubetskoi, such as “Speculation in Colors” (1915), “Two Worlds in Ancient Russian Icon Painting” (1916), “Russia in Icons” (1917). Those studies raised an interest in religious painting and in ancient Russian culture at large. However, the current “ignorance of Russia”, which has reached unprecedented magnitudes, generates many incompetent (mostly contrasting) and superficial arguments about the Russian Idea. This concept is distorted in conformity to predetermined criteria, notions or subjective motives. The Russian Idea is quite often declared a result of ethnocentrism, idealization and absolutization of intellectual and psychological qualities of the Russian nation. In other words, it is a product of what has to be denounced, condemned and eventually repented. Such hypercritical versions do not explain but rather obscure the meaning of the Russian Idea and lay on it a national-messianic negative imprint that does not correspond to its historically formed image.

In fact, since the Middle Ages Christian messianism has been characteristic of Russian self-identity. Its historical basis can be explained by what historians called the “special resistance” of the Asian steppe by Ancient [Kiev] Rus, which for a long time resisted the aggressions by nomadic tribes of the East. By its historical fate and geography – being in between the European West and Asian East – Rus was doomed to a messianic role of defending Europe. In Pushkin’s words:

Russia was designated for a high calling: its boundless plains swallowed the force of the Mongols and stopped their invasions on the very edge of Europe. The barbarians could not take the liberty of leaving in their rear a subjugated Rus, and hence were compelled always to fall back to their Eastern steppe. Hence, Enlightenment in its formative stage was salvaged by a tormented Russia in her last breath.

But the comprehension of the noble destiny of Orthodox Russia by the majority of Russian thinkers was far from an aggressive messianism. On the contrary, their religious self-identity, in the person of its best representatives, was on the verge, in the words of G. Fedetov, of a “holy ascetic feat” that received its highest expression in the blessing by Sergei Radonezhskii of the icons of Peresvet and Oслиaba before participation in the battle of Kulikov.

The sources of the national religious idea, taken in a wide cultural-historical context, go back to the outstanding piece of ancient Russian



thought of the first half of 11<sup>th</sup> century – the “Word on Law and Grace” of the Russian Metropolitan. In recent years the beginning of the Russian religious-philosophical thought is related to that historical document. A laconic, philosophically rich exposition of the world outlook of those times, the “Word” at the same time is a highly artistic production intended to glorify the Russian land, which accepted baptism and joined the family of Christian peoples.

The Messianic theme is developed further by the doctrine: “Moscow is the Third Rome”, which was formulated by the Filofei, a member of the Eleazarov monastery, and remained in the peoples’ consciousness as the idea of “Holy Rus”. After the downfall of Constantinople (the Second Rome), Russia remained the only Orthodox country – a safe-haven for Eastern Christian tradition. It was in this sense that Filofei perceived it as the Third Rome, “Once two Romes fell down, the third stands, and there will be no fourth”. An important factor which sustained this idea was the dynastic relations of the Moscow Tzars with Byzantium; for example, Tzar Ivan III was married to the Greek princess Sophia. What is reflected in this doctrine is the general will of collective religious and historical salvation, not only of the Russian people, but also of the whole Orthodox world.

Incipient Protestantism followed a totally different type of messianism. Calvinism in England, the Netherlands and France at that time, according to Max Weber, was characterized by belief in the God-chosen people. The gist of Calvinism is the idea of the people “chosen for salvation.” Weber underscores this in studies of the Protestant ethics, i.e. the division of individuals and peoples into two categories – one destined for eternal life, the other for eternal suffering. The form Orthodox-Christian messianism took in Russia is not similar to the individualistic messianism of Protestantism: The Christian universalism of the Russian Idea is totally alien to the Protestant particularism.

A systematized religious-philosophical substantiation of the Russian Idea dates back to Vladimir Solovyov. In 1888 he read a public lecture “The Russian Idea” in Paris. It was immediately published in French and was highly praised by the Catholic press. There was no trace of national narcissism, ethnocentrism, and the “official peoplehood – *arodnosti*” in Solovyov’s “Russian Idea”. On the contrary, he sharply criticized everything that later Berdiaev called “church nationalism”: the political system, the church, official patriotism. This study was published abroad to save it from the Russian government’s censorship. Solovyov is against the narrow-mindedness of nationalism, underscoring that the dignity of a nation is defined by the highest achievements of its spirituality, its contribution to world civilization and the “real unity of the human race”, and not by “what it thinks about herself”. Solovyov emphasized that “the idea of nation is not what it thinks of itself temporally, but is what God thinks of it eternally”, which is a complete rejection of any ethnocentrism. It is not division, but a synthesis of the cultural-historical unity of the Christian world that has to

face a “multitude of centrifugal forces”. In a nutshell, this is the content of the first theoretically conceived conception of the Russian Idea which was declared in 1888.

Solovyov’s concept of the Russian Idea was integrally connected to his personality and reflected not only his thought and “philosophical temperament”, but also his psychological traits, personal adherences, tastes and ideals. Any display of artificial, ostentatious patriotism was deeply alien to Solovyov. He had many qualities, which made him closer to the people and to the Russian national environment. Biographers especially mark such attractive features of his character as magnanimity, happiness, tolerance and tact. The sincerity and high spirituality of the Russian philosopher as an individual of pure morals and kindness, a disinterested servant of truth – all these placed a bright imprint on his interpretation of the Russian Idea.

Solovyov formulated the Russian Idea precisely as the people’s religious idea. Therefore, it should also adequately embody the character of the Russian “social body,” i.e. the people whose religion is Orthodox. Treated this way, the idea of statehood or Church received in official Russia a hypertrophied development, and is only the other side of the being of the Russian people. Therefore, Solovyov did not aspire to formulate any national hypercriticism passing into nihilism. He puts forward a religious-universalistic concept of the transformation of Russian life, the perfection and deepening of the Christian existence of the nation, which in many respects he thought of as a reasonable self-restriction, service to the universal ideals of good and justice. In this sense Solovyov’s predecessors were the Slavophil, including K. Alsace, who wrote about the existence of a national “Russian outlook”. “The people’s outlook”, he remarked, “is the independent outlook of the people which is the only possible way to grasp the general human truth.”

Solovyov’s line of interpretation of the Russian Idea was continued by representatives of the Russian cultural renaissance at the beginning of the 20th century, such as V. Rozanov, N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov, V. Ivanov, E. Trubetskoi, L. Karsavin, V. Ern and others. Like V. Solovyov they are distinguished by their adherence to a high spirituality and feelings of compassion and mercy.

“Nobody deserves praise; everybody deserves only pity” wrote Rozanov in his book *Solitude*, having expressed in these words one of the most characteristic features of the Russian character in this very laconic and figurative way. It is not by chance that the first Russian saints canonized by the Russian Church were the great martyrs most esteemed by the people, Boris and Gleb – the younger sons of the Great Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich – who became victims of the internecine war that arose after the death of the Great Prince. They were killed under the order of their senior brother, Sviatopolk, who took the father’s throne. From this follows one of the features of the Russian Idea – the compassion noted by many Russian thinkers. Holy Boris and Gleb have caused an original national and

partially even a paradoxical type of the Russian saint as sufferer. This is paradoxical since the life of the Prince's sons did not contain any proof that they suffered for their Christian belief. The secret of their reverence in Rus was determined, probably, on the basis of their violent death, and the people's pity towards them. Moreover, this reverence was "at once established as national, even before the Church canonized them." (Fedotov G. P., *The Holy of Ancient Rus*. M., 1990, p. 40).

Despite the huge losses borne and suffered by the Russian individual in the 20th century, this internal quality of the Russian soul is still alive. Its confirmation can be found, for example, in the present Russian political practice which has shown that the popularity of the new political leaders quite often is created not by their abilities, individual vital success, or attractive appearance (as it would happen in the West), but by compassion and pity, sympathy, etc. Here, for example, lay the secret of the success of President Boris Yeltsin.

This deep-rooted feature of Russianness, however, is not a subject for admiration, for in real life it served and until now serves as the basis for every possible political manipulation: serious state policy can not be based upon the Russian long-suffering and compassion.

The difficult lessons of history testify to this. Humility and self-renunciation could be excessive and be followed by national destruction, rejection of one's historical traditions, culture and statehood. The Russian is not an unknown tribe, not like some tribes that vanished in the 11th century, about which is known only that they used to attack the Eastern Slavs. The spiritual qualities of the Russian people were formed over centuries, and have given the people their "special physiognomy", about which A. Pushkin wrote, seeing it in the "ideas and feelings, dark customs, superstitions, and habits". It is impossible to overlook it.

The Russian soul is not, of course, what many politicized publicists write about it when real knowledge of Russia is replaced by demagogic discourses about the national character. The meaning of such discourses was deeply exposed in 1848 by F. Tyutchev, a Russian diplomat, poet and thinker. He described it, in particular, as going hand in hand with the attempts to distort and suppress the national character of Russians which took root in Europe after Napoleon's Wars, and since then became so regular. Tyutchev called these phenomena "Russophobia"; since then, this phenomenon has repeatedly emerged on the surface of historical events.

The tradition of research on the Russian national character is especially well presented in the works of N. Berdyaev. His works give not simply a description, but a panoramic vision of the national spirit, which received its embodiment in Russian history, philosophy, art, Orthodox religion, and morals. The result of his life work in this area was the book, *The Russian Idea* (1946) – written by him shortly before his death, and soon translated into English and French. Berdyaev's well-known essay "The Soul of Russia" (1915-1918) represented his first study of the theme of the Russian Idea, and he later devoted himself to its further elaboration. What

distinguishes Berdyaev's study is the theme of the contradictions of the Russian soul, developed in his peculiar manner of wide historical and theoretical generalizations, paradoxical comparisons and parallels, and philosophical-psychological descriptions of Russian character types.

It is possible to argue about the trace left by the Christian *yurodivies* ("God's fools"), the unfortunate, and the offended in modern Russian literature. But there is no doubt that in the 19th century this was the leading theme for the Russian intelligentsia that aspired to merge with the people, and repay its "debt to the people" (L. Lavrov), and "to become common" (L. Tolstoi). Images of the people's defenders, stories about the sufferings of those who require protection and patronage literally overflow pages and pages of the books published in Russia in those decades. The first ideas of Russian socialism, stated by V. Belinsky in 1841, recall in many respects an initial Christianity.

After the Revolution of 1905 the calls to a feat of self-sacrifice in the name and blessing of the people are replaced in Russian society by the Gogol motives of concern for the destiny of the nation and its culture. In 1909 N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov, M. Hershenson, A. Izgoev, B. Kistiakovskiy, P. Struve and S. Frank published the collection *Vekhi* (Milestones) which contained a demand for the revision of the traditional values of the Russian intelligentsia. The severe realities of the revolutionary events, and the wreckage of hopes placed by parliamentary politics put in front of the authors of the collection a problem which was converse to that promoted by the revolutionary intelligentsia. They declared that it was not the intelligentsia which had to "pay back its debt to the people", but on the contrary, the people and the society had to defend the spiritual basis of national culture. In his article, "Heroism and Selfless Devotion", S. Bulgakov quite fairly reproached the way the intelligentsia underestimated the national theme through losing the feeling of love of one's history, the feeling of "full blooded historical connection". In the "intelligentsia's palette", he ironized, there remained only two colors: "black for the past, and rose for the future".

V. Rozanov in his approach to the theme of Russian Idea used an original and bright literary manner. In the traditional comparison of "Russia-West", he introduced new motives characteristic of his philosophy of man and woman. Figuratively representing Russia as female, and Europe as masculine, Rozanov transfers the age-old antithesis from the sphere of high abstraction to the level of Orthodox daily life and family that are close and clear to all. "The Russians have a propensity to surrender oneself wholeheartedly to alien influence...precisely as a bride and a wife surrender to a husband. But the more this "surrender" is wholehearted, clean, and unselfish, even to the point of "self-annihilation", the more in some mysterious way this "surrender" becomes that of the one who receives this "surrender".

Some works by V. Ivanov, which have major culturological importance, are also devoted to the Russian Idea. A leading poet and

theoretician of symbolism, a linguist and a student of Hellenism, a scholar of broadest cultural interests, Ivan regularly organized in his St. Petersburg apartment ("The Tower") intellectual gatherings in which the major problems of Russian literary, philosophical and religious life were discussed. Ivan, with V. Ern, were considered as the representatives of the new generation of Slavophiles, or neo-Slavophiles. Such an evaluation (actually only approximate) appeared during the First World War, which enhanced interest in national problems. "Before the War the word 'patriotism' was disliked among us but in the years of the War we got fond of it".

The revival of the Russian Idea at this time was not a simple return to the Slavophilism of A.Khomiakov and I. Kireyevsky. The War caused a new, and hitherto unprecedented reaction of the Russian public consciousness. According to Ivanov, Slavophilism at this time became a "legend", an "old sect". Its peculiar features such as romanticism and optimism, which correlated with the positive, optimistic, "epic" manner of the Russian soul, went counter to the Russian soul's new "tragic" manner that appeared in the new epoch of wars and revolutions.

The Russian Idea was not alien to "national self-criticism", whose classical samples were given by P. Chaadaev. "Having shot at Russia" in his first "Philosophical Letter", Chaadaev presented Russia with such serious charges, that they nearly put him outside of history. However, recognizing subsequently the "exaggeration in this accusation of Russia", he later justified his attack, saying that Russia had seen even more scathing attacks. Taking as an example the well-known Gogol comedy "The Auditor-Revizor", Chaadaev wrote: "Never was any people so castigated, never was any country so dragged into the dirt". Even those currents of the Russian Idea which frequently idealized Russia recognized her defects. A.Khomiakov, for example, ruthlessly criticized the defects of the Orthodox Church, marked the deep roots in Russia of "illiteracy, injustice, robbery, sedition, personality (denunciation-M.M.), oppression, poverty, disorder, uneducatedness and debauchery". Such fearlessness and ruthless criticism of the defects and historical omissions by Russia could hardly be found in characterizations of other countries. The Russian Idea, thus, is characterized by repentance, understood in the Christian spirit as transformation and purification.

The beliefs of the Russian people were and will remain different. Some, after Dostoevsky, believe in the "world responsiveness" of the Russian individual, regarding as its symbol the genius of Pushkin. Others, for example, K. Leontiev, did not agree with that view, and were against the "world love" of an abstract humankind, and showed the bankruptcy of the thesis about the necessity of "humility before the people". However, supporters of the idea of the state and conservatives were seldom among those developing the Russian Idea. The concept of the strong state was unpopular by virtue of its affinity to the Imperial authority. Therefore the intelligentsia refused to have anything to do with it, and left it to the

ideologists, like the General Prosecutor of the Synod, K. Pobedonotsev, to develop. Some liberal intellectuals later – after the October Revolution – accepted the idea of a strong state. So in one of his after-October diaries V. Vernadsky regretfully noted that “Russian society did not understand and appreciate the great goodness of the large state”.

The foregoing proved the Russian Idea to be a complex, ambiguous, multilevel and multidimensional concept, which reflects the many alternatives of the historical road of Russia. But the concept of the “Russian Idea” should include not only the religious, but also the rationalist notions of an enlightenment type.

The great Russian historian, N. I. Kareev, in his capacity as Professor of history at the Warsaw University (1879-1884) read a public lecture “On the Spirit of Russian Science”. The lecture was read on November 9th 1884. In it Kareev underscored those features “of the spiritual physiognomy” of the Russian people, which are connected to its extraordinary susceptibility to scientific ideas – firstly coming from Europe, and then spreading and developing in Russia itself. “The Spirit of Russian Science”, according to the definition of Kareev, is a spirit of realism, susceptibility and self-criticism. This spirit, which has proved its efficiency in the scientific sphere, requires a wider circulation in all spheres of public life. In this opinion of the scholar lies the main hope of Russia.

In contrast to the Christian tradition, which for many decades was under interdiction, scientific and rationalist ideas were not forbidden, but on the contrary, were encouraged widely. After the October Revolution, for example, significant work on the history of Russian revolutionary thought was undertaken. Its historical monuments and books were published. However, many distortions and deformations were introduced into its interpretation. Much of that heritage was simply rejected as the heritage of the Socialist Revolutionaries, anarchists and Cadets (Constitutional Democrats). At the same time, there was also an artificial overestimation of the “uncompromising Russian revolutionism”. This was expressed, in particular, in the design of a rigid “revolutionary type”, beginning with the founder of the Russian revolutionary tradition, A. Radiszhev, and up to the School of the “60<sup>s</sup>” epitomized by N. Chernyzhevsky. But neither Radiszhev nor Chernyzhevsky were in real life those “automatic revolutionaries” found for many decades in the pages of the books on the history of the liberation movement in Russia. The national originality of these original theorists of the “Russian dream” was ignored in the name of the concept of permanent revolutionary democratism, constantly accruing since the 18th century. Meanwhile, to the concept of “vengeance” (the revenge of the oppressed peasants in relation to the unmerciful landowners) is added “human love”, (a contradiction in terms). As for Chernyzhevsky, owing to his temperament and type of thinking, he was not at all the ruthless rebel as he is quite often represented. At the same time, steps were undertaken in popular and scholarly literature suggesting a direct clash between the Russian revolutionary tradition and Marxism as a clash

between “utopia and science”. As a result of this, many valuable insights of the “Russian dream” were rejected as utopian, whereas they were only not in complete correspondence with the dogmatized version of Marxism about the “true socialism“. This was the fate of the Narodnik doctrine about cooperation, which followed from the theory of Russian communitary socialism, and also the socio-psychological and ethical theories of the Russian socialists.

After the October Revolution among the first who undertook serious analysis of the crisis of the Russian Idea were the Russian thinkers who for different reasons were expelled from the country and immigrated to the West. As they kept their Russianness and their intellectual connections with the West, the representatives of the “First Wave” of emigrants, presented in the West the traditions of Russian culture.

The Russian migration is a whole phenomenon of 20th century culture. It included writers and artists, philosophers and musicians. Among them were such famous names such as N. Berdyaev, I. Ilyin, N. Lossky, S. Frank, G. Fedotov, I. Bunin, F. Shalyapin, S. Diaghilev, S. Rakhmaninov, V. Kandinsky, and others. It is impossible here to describe in detail all those supporters of the Russian Idea. Let us concentrate on two philosophers who have contributed significantly to the Russian Idea – Fedotov and Ilyin.

G. Fedotov emigrated from the USSR in 1925. Abroad he closely monitored everything that occurred in his native land. He saw the pattern of the October Revolution as an expression of the aspirations of modern civilization towards the formation of a new type of human person and humankind. He saw the features of the “Euro-American individual” in an increasing leveling rooted in the general crisis of the “national spirit”, caused by modern mass culture. Therefore, the “generation that does not remember its roots” is not exclusively a Russian, but an international phenomenon. This was prepared by the whole course of Europeanization and modernization, which steadily took root in Russia after the 1960s. The Revolution has extremely accelerated these processes, having done in years “the work of centuries”. Despite its deep connection with religious culture, Fedotov considered insisting on the exclusive religiosity of the Russian character to be incorrect and ahistorical – ahistorical because in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia was more religious than Europe, but not so in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it reached the same level of secularization as in the West. The emphasis on “Russian religious originality” is not a general actual condition of culture, but only its local dimension, namely everyday rites are peripheral, in relation to the general shape of culture. To speak about violent preservation of the special religious adherence of the Russian Idea in the 20<sup>th</sup> century puts what is desirable in place of reality. Clearly, the opinion about the special religiosity of the Russian people, which was shared by many Russian immigrant thinkers, was in a way a protective reaction against the violent secularization and its “state-supported atheism”.

Much of what was proposed by Fedotov reminds one of ideas put forward even today. Criticism of technocratism, humanization and

humanitarization of culture, revival of classical education, elimination of incompetent state-bureaucratic interference in spiritual life, establishment in society of an atmosphere of “national conversation”, education of the feeling of a spiritual hierarchy of values—these and other problems are urgent for the Russian Idea even now.

I. Ilyin was a supporter of traditional spiritual values, a conservative who opposed the immigrants such as Berdyaev who interpreted the Orthodox texts more freely. He criticized Berdyaev for his remaining sympathy for socialism, expressed in particular in his “identification and mixture of Russia with the Soviet Union”. Ilyin believed that the bases of the Russian national character were built, and would be constructed hereafter, mainly on a traditional Orthodox-Christian basis. Like Fedotov, he asserted that the crisis of Russian culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is deeper than the crises in the sphere of economy and politics, since it affects the fundamental bases of Russian spirituality. At the same time, with amazing optimism, he declared: “I deeply and unshakably believe that the Russian people will cope with this crisis, will restore and revive the spiritual forces, and rejuvenate their famous national history“.

After his expulsion from the USSR in 1922 Ilyin became one of the theorists of the White movement, whose ideological bases were too vague and blurred, and about which there existed mostly false misconceptions. It would be a mistake to think that the rejection of Bolshevism and communism by the immigrant thinkers was reduced only to the military aspect, with the purpose of restoring the old order. Immediately after the end of the Civil War Ilyin asserted that its “disaster and insanity” had to be recognized, and everything had to be done not to repeat it: henceforth, “no drop of blood” should be spilled for overcoming ideological, property, or any other type of strife. The pathos of Ilyin was directed to defending the constructive work of religious revival, education, law and order, economy, family and everyday life. He called for an order of things, in which “sobriety and improvement go hand in hand; where hatred exhausts and envy is exhausted; and where patriotism and civility arise in the souls of the people”.

In its “self-increment” the Russian Idea, in our opinion, passed through large historical stages corresponding to the periods of rising national self-consciousness on the part of the Russian people. Its beginning goes back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, to the sources of the national spirit. In the “Word of Law and Grace” of Ilarion, the periodization of world history is given, within which that of Rus as a Christian country finds a worthy place. The transition of humankind from paganism to Judaism, and then to Christianity is drawn as humankind’s solemn procession to the path of Truth. Comparing the Old and the New Testaments, the law and grace, Ilarion substantiates the Christian idea of God – mildness, mercy, love with a joyful and free sensation of life in contrast to the fatalism and rigid regulations of Judaism. These philosophical-historical and ethical motives



which permeate the “Word” form the basis for historical optimism, and the expectation of a great future for Russia.

The Kulikov Battle (1380) caused a new rise of national self-consciousness in the 14-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and then the revival of Russian medieval culture in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This “Moscow” period of national history is marked by the formation of the idea of Russian religious messianism, substantiation of the idea of the unity of the Russian state led by its historical centre – Moscow.

The “Petersburg” stage is opened by the epoch of her modernization and the reformation begun by Peter the Great. According to Belinsky’s definition, from here “the time of consciousness” for Russia begins “as she understands herself in “Europeanness”. The idea of Europeanness achieves its apogee in Russian education, whose central theme becomes the Granovsky transformation of Russia into a modern state of the European type. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century some loss of influence by the prevailing religious outlook and a fall of traditional culture was witnessed in Russia. At that time prince M.M.Sherbatov wrote the book, *About the Damage to the Traditions of Russia*, in which he described a situation of decline in the country. Actually in this period the country was moving to a new culture and came closer to the “Century of Enlightenment“. It was the time of the first Russian scientist of world significance, M. Lomonosov, huge successes in industry and trade, navigation, book and paper publishing.

The Enlightenment idea perceived by the intelligentsia inspired by the Decembrists, experienced a crisis in the 1830s-1840s. A way out of the crisis became an orientation to more complex and dynamic ideas proposed by Chaadaev, Belinsky, Herzen, and Slavophil. From this period began a new takeoff of the national spirit, which embraced all the main spheres of culture: philosophy, literature, and divinity. The new rise of spirit had also a wider, Slavic, context. So, Slavophilism arose on the basis of a counter movement to “Slavic reciprocity” in Europe. A.Khomiakov, K. Aksakov, and F. Tyutchev had connections with the leaders of the Slavic national movement: V. Ganka, P. Shafarik, F. Platsky. I. Aksakov wrote that “this aspiration to closer rapprochement with the Slavic world began in Russia to take on a public character”. Not only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also before it, since the 11<sup>th</sup> century and earlier an affinity to Slavism was characteristic of the development of Russian spirituality. The formation of the Russian language and education was based on the Old Slavic language (the language of the Church), a Bulgarian language in its roots, which introduced to Rus the sacred brothers Cyril and Mefody. The Slavic orientation of the Russian culture went further, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, from Bulgaria to Serbia, Poland and Czechia, but remained constant. Thus, the Russian Idea was born from the idea of Slavic unity.

The Russian Ideas are, at the same time, the All-Russian Idea. Its historical development, which took place on a huge territory populated by numerous peoples who lived together for a long time, testifies to its

openness to the various cultures that nourished it. The bearers of the Russian Idea were not only Russians, but also those who came from other peoples connected to Russia by a common historical destiny – the Greek Mikhail Trivolis (Maksim Grek), the Croatian Yuri Krizhanich, the Belarus Frantsisk Skorin, the Ukrainian Feofan Prokopovich, and Grigory Skovorod, the Moldavians Dmitry and Antioch Kantemirs, the Armenian Michael Nabladian, the Azeri Mirza Fatal Akhundov, the Georgians Ilya Javjadze and Akaky Tsereteli, the Kazakh Chokan Velikhanov, the Jewish Isaac Levitan and Mikhail Herzhenson and many, many others.

Many prominent figures of diverse national-historical roots devoted their lives to the service of Russia. Among them the great military commanders, Barklai de Tolli, Bagration; seafarers, Bering, Bellingshausen, Kruzenstern; scientists, Ber, Lents, Jacobi; architects, Rastrelli, Rossi, Bove.

The Russian Idea has proven in history the validity and authenticity of its “world responsiveness”, its readiness for self-restriction and even for self-sacrifice and service to the world. But does the Russian Idea have any future? An answer to this question is not easy. There is no need to prove that its prospects are connected to the general socio-economic progress and to the growth in the well-being of the people. Undoubtedly, Russia cannot be revived with mere “external” – economic and political – means for its “internal” condition; spiritual-moral revival is necessary for Russia’s revival. In the last analysis, the question of whether a national consensus in the name of her preservation will be achieved depends on whether the society will be ready to accept the heritage of the Russian Idea in its indivisible, complete form, without new breakages and confrontations. Will society come to an understanding that material progress taken in itself, separately, is inconceivable without cultural-national progress, and without the free development of the individual?

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century E. Trubetskoi in the article “Old and New National Messianism” (1912), wrote that, the reply to the “question on the future of the Russian Idea is like Ivan, The Prince, standing at a triple crossroad before choosing the correct way. Today, in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is possible to underscore with confidence that the national idea already has tried two extremely disastrous roads – ‘left’ and ‘right’. As a result, the Hero (Vitiaz) has lost his horse, and has nearly turned into the Ivan who never remembers his kin. Only the untried way, “the middle way”, the difficult direct road, will probably mean that “it will face both cold and hunger”. The way chosen by Ivan, The Prince, we hope, will lead her at last to happiness.

## CHAPTER VIII

# **“THE RUSSIAN IDEA”: IN SEARCH OF NATIONAL IDENTITY**

*VIACHESLAV V. SERBINENKO*

There are no strict boundaries between the history of ideas and metaphysics, on the one hand, and ideology, on the other. The most complex metaphysical systems are often subjected to ideological interpretation. For example, it might be imagined that Hegelian thought cannot be conveyed in the simplified language of ideology. Yet it has been espoused with extraordinary ease by many radicals and conservatives, in both the West and Russia, on the basis of their own ideological enthusiasms. I should specify that I use the terms ‘philosophy’ and ‘metaphysics’ synonymously. Against the background of positivism and then of Marxism during the nineteenth century, ‘metaphysics’ acquired a negative connotation: it was set against first ‘scientific’ and then ‘dialectical’ philosophy. But the historian of philosophy, even if he partakes of such assessments, cannot ignore the fact that from Aristotle’s time the traditional second word for philosophy has been metaphysics. Ideological metamorphoses, which have in this century affected many philosophers (Nietzschean, Marxist, and other), would appear in equal measure to suggest that metaphysics does not provide any security against the ideologization of philosophy.

Such guarantees certainly do not exist. In principle, any cultural form, not merely philosophical ideas, may be deployed as ideological symbols. There are numerous examples of works of art being used ideologically. However, just as ideological art cannot merge into ideology and lose its essence, so also can metaphysics proper not be reduced to its ideological ‘reflection’. The latter is always a distortion of the original and is its simplified schematization. Indeed, it is a case where ‘simplicity is worse than theft’. Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Mind*, translated into the language of ideology, becomes an altogether different ‘text’. Bearing in mind their proper metaphysical content and not their individual ‘motivations’, the philosophical investigations of Plato, Hegel and Nietzsche retain their position in the ‘eternal’ world of Platonic ideas, whatever the ideological elements foisted on them. The ideological orientation of Marxism was obvious enough from the outset, but even so, it is not exhausted by the ideology of the Soviet Marxist-Leninist (or any other) variety. Thus regardless of the efforts of ideologues, the ontological elements of these doctrines may not be subjected to such ‘translation’, save at the expense of an obvious vulgarization.

The very concept of the 'Russian Idea' and its interpretations emerged and were formulated during the nineteenth century in Russia in the context of just such a Russian and religious metaphysics. The metaphysical level of the notion of the 'Russian Idea', which we encounter among so many major Russian thinkers of the nineteenth and then the twentieth centuries, must not be confused with sundry attempts at elaborating a national ideology. Ideology is always functional and the entire meaning of its existence is contained in that purpose. If it appears to be stillborn or ceases to play an active public role, its meaning dissipates; ideological paradigms sink into obscurity and become of purely antiquarian interest. Their resurrection, naturally in new forms, is entirely possible; even so a new life for an old ideology is determined wholly by the degree of its public influence. The philosophical reflections on the fate of Russia, which occupy such an essential place in nineteenth century Russian philosophy, did not exert a significant influence on the social processes in the country. This then was not subject to any sort of fragility, debility or abstraction from 'real life' (the standard charges of common sense against 'abstract' metaphysics), but primarily because they were philosophic in nature. Philosophy is always a matter of personal reason. These words belong to Vladimir Soloviev; but many metaphysicians from Plato to Kant proposed as much. Kant declared it the 'sacred duty' of the philosopher to be consistent and to that degree responsible for his ideas. 'Personal reason' of the philosopher is wholly responsible for the results of the search for the truth. They are themselves oriented to another 'personal reason', which may be quite as critical. Metaphysical ideas are founded on understanding (which is impossible without critique), and not on influence, still less that of a mass nature. Metaphysics does not differ from ideology – not by its elite, hermetic or esoteric attributes. The Socratic spirit of European and certainly Russian philosophy is profoundly democratic, oriented to any and every person capable and willing to reflect. Thus the 'Russian Socrates', G. Skvorod, was always ready for 'Socratic disputes' with A. Khomiakov and many others.

It is symbolic that the very concept, the 'Russian Idea', was given literary currency by Dostoevsky. It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the work and ideas of this writer for subsequent Russian religious philosophy. Dostoevsky propounded this when he was dissatisfied not only with Westernism, but also with Slavophilism. He sought to define a new ideal, *pochveniichestvo*. It is symbolic also that from the very beginning the 'Russian Idea' was understood by Dostoevsky in a non-ideological sense. It was not a matter of a specific type of national ideology opposed in some sense to other national ideologies such that it would permit Russia to perform certain definite historical tasks, internal and external. When he first used the expression 'Russian Idea' in the early 1860s, Dostoevsky proceeded from his own metaphysical intuition of the universalism of the national culture and national character to which he remained faithful to the end. He did so in his renowned Pushkin speech

when he called for ‘universal human brotherhood’ [*vsechelovecheskoe bratstvo*]; and again in the final articles of *The Diary of a Writer* when he spoke of ‘Russian Socialism’. His first delineation of the ‘Russian Idea’, in his “Appeal for Subscriptions” to the journal *Vremia* for 1861, was as follows:

We know we do not shelter ourselves from humanity behind Chinese walls. We can foresee with due respect that the nature of our future activity must properly embrace all of humanity, that the Russian Idea would perhaps be the synthesis of all those ideas which, with such resolve and courage, Europe elaborates in its various distinct nationalities; that all that are conflictual in these ideas would probably be reconciled through the further development of Russian nationality [*narodnost*]. It is not for nothing that we speak all languages, understand all cultures, sympathize with the interest of each European people, and grasp the meaning and rationality of phenomena which are utterly alien to us.<sup>1</sup>

The tone of the proposition is significant. Dostoevsky ‘knows’ that the path of national exclusiveness (Chinese walls) would lead into a cul-de-sac, but he merely ‘anticipates’ (‘perhaps’) the probably positive possibilities of Russian (in both senses)<sup>2</sup> ‘human universalism’ [*vsechelovechnost*]. Such ‘suggestiveness’ is entirely out of place in ideological pronouncements. Here everything must be clear and categorical. But in metaphysical discourse it is more than appropriate to proceed through hypotheses. The thinker must be cautious in the extreme so that his metaphysical viewpoint and intuitions could relate to concrete historical prospects.

It is quite clear why Dostoevsky was convinced that the centrifugal forces of a splintering humanity were disastrous. As a Christian thinker he proceeded from the universalism of Christianity without admitting priority, still less supremacy, to any single national idea. At the same time he did not accept the alienation of various peoples and traditions as a final and inevitable destiny. The dominion of any single nation aspiring to the role of

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<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoevsky, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, xviii (Leningrad, 1978), p. 115. Translator’s note: The author specifies the distinction between *russskiy* denoting the Russian ethnos alone, and *russsiiskii* pertaining to all the inhabitants of the Russian Empire, two words for which there is only one translation, ‘Russian’, in English.

<sup>2</sup> I would select in this context two works: G. Florovskii, ‘Metafizicheskie predposyiki utopizma’, *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 10 (1990); and P. Novgorodtsev, *Ob obshchestvennom ideale* (Moscow, 1991).

the 'chosen people' was fundamentally unacceptable from the Christian point of view; but that need not prevent one or another people from leaving their special imprint on 'Christ's business', or playing an important – and possibly even a decisive – role in the attainment of the ideal of human universalism or *vsechelovechnost*. In the Russian religious-philosophical thought of the nineteenth century, the question of Christian messianism was posed exceptionally sharply.

If we were to consider the metaphysical level of the dispute between Slavophiles and Westernisers – and I am convinced that their opposition was founded on metaphysical principles – then the decisive question was not the specific historical fate of Russia and the West, or the relations between the two. Slavophiles and Westernisers (at least the religious Westernisers like Petr Chaadaev and V. Pechorin) discussed the reality of the Christian path of history, how far the European peoples and Russia were going down this road, and whether it was possible in general. For Dostoevsky the experience of approximating Christ in history was as justified as for each Christian in his or her personal life. But this was to exclude any form of hegemonism or pretensions to the role of supreme judge and commander. (His negative appraisal of the Catholic idea was related to this position.) Moreover just as the private success of the individual can in no way guarantee his 'success' along the 'narrow path' of Christianity leading to salvation, so is power that is acquired by peoples and states in the historical arena no evidence of having been God's elect. Historical 'pluses' could easily be negated by religious and metaphysical 'minuses'. Ultimately, according to Dostoevsky, the road to power and terrestrial might is the road of the Grand Inquisitor.

The fortitude with which the people bore their tragic historical fate without abandoning their awareness of imperfection and sinfulness is a mark of their having conserved their 'image of Christ'. They did not wish to regard the circumstances and laws of 'this world' as the ultimate truth. Through all the history of Russian thought and literature the image of Russia moves – as suffering, as bearing repeated strokes of misfortune, as consuming herself in historic conflagrations, but nevertheless, as always renewing herself like the Phoenix and aspiring to be the true Resurrection. Whatever the historical and intellectual gulf that separates the ancient Russian ideal of 'Holy Russia' and the image of Russia 'crucified' in the revolutions and wars of our epoch, it cannot be denied that they constitute a single perennial theme of the Russian national cultural tradition. In this case there is ground for speaking of a paradigm.

However, the range of ideas within this paradigm was enormous, from total anti-historicism, a radical repudiation of this world, rejection of the historical forms of state and society (including those of the Church), to a cultural creativity to the extent of assisting in a holy mission of the Russian state worldwide (the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome), and on the sacralization of monarchical power as the only true – and the highest – form, not only of political, but also of social life. We note that the first

tendency in the sphere of religious consciousness is in the Russian schism and in sectarian movements. Finally, such attitudes were found not only outside the Church, but even within the Orthodox Church. The continuation of the Russian struggle with history, especially in its most radical forms, may be discerned in the ideas of Tolstoy's later works and in the twentieth century in the works of N. Berdiaev.

The second type of Russian messianism also has its own history. The first was related to the attempt to create a single national ideology during the Muscovite tsardom (most of all I. Volotskii), and then the Russian Empire. These were, however, only the extreme cases of the 'Russian Idea'. (As is well known, contradictions were reconciled, and both types of messianism often coincided in practice – when they acquired strange and even grotesque forms.) In the history of Russian thought the prevailing tendency was to avoid having to choose between the image of Russia and the Russian people, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other. The image of Russia was like the legendary city of Kitezh that lay outside history and guarded itself from the world through mystical experiences and moral strivings. Russia was the heir to Rome and Byzantium, discerning her historical destiny in the unlimited accumulation of state power. Russian religious ideas of the nineteenth century – and then of the twentieth – faced a dilemma that was not of significance to Russia alone: how, without denying the world and history, to remain faithful to the ideals of Christianity and not submit to the natural course of things; how to stand unflinchingly on the well-trodden road of historical struggle for national and state interests. Is the Christian path in history possible in general, or, are the wanderings of the hermit and the cell of the monk its sole and true symbols?

In the quest for an answer to this perennial and, I would suggest, agonizing question to Christian thinking, Russian thinkers could not always escape the temptation of utopianism. But it would be totally wrong to equate the results of their spiritual quest with utopianism, and still less, with religious nationalism. Perhaps Dostoevsky alone put his finger on the essence of utopianism when commenting on what numerous forms of utopianism meant for humankind. But Dostoevsky's ideas do not of course exhaust the critical tradition of Russian religious philosophy.<sup>3</sup> His understanding of the 'Russian Idea' was definitely directed against nationalist ideology.

He saw Christian messianism as providing for the achievement of two historical objectives. The first was the people defining their place in history and fully expressing their national uniqueness in culture and in all spheres of life. The second was for them radically to overcome their national exclusiveness through the creative assimilation of other intellectual traditions and the experience of the historical creations of other peoples.

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<sup>3</sup> F. M. Dostoevsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, xxvi, pp. 130-1.

Dostoevsky believed that were Russia to choose this – in his opinion, truly Christian – path, she could not only successfully express her uniqueness and remain true to the historical ‘soil’ (“to the people’s spirit and to the people’s principles”), but also demonstrate to mankind the real possibility of escaping the vicious historical circles of alienation and enmity. In his famous Pushkin speech, he spoke precisely about this, and his main argument was Pushkin’s own work.

The argument, it must be admitted, was thoroughly metaphysical. From the point of view of common sense and philosophical investigations orientated to both scientific and common sense, the effort to present the output of a single – even if great – poet as the essence of the historical being of the people would appear absurd. By what criteria can one meaningfully prefer the work of Pushkin, Shakespeare or Tagore to all other facets of the historical life of a nation? The work of an artist is possibly a significant historical fact, but it is just one in an endless series of historical events. Only the metaphysician could admit the possibility of regarding facts ‘from the point of view of eternity’ and make a selection. In the metaphysical tradition beginning with Plato (and following him a Christian Platonism), Dostoevsky’s choice does not in the least seem absurd. In the universe of Plato’s “eternal paradigm” concepts there is a place for the notion of peoples and of their national being. It would be legitimate to seek this first through the people’s intellectual life a significant part of which is the creations of their artistic genius.

This is exactly what Dostoevsky chose to do by declaring the works of Pushkin a symbol of the ‘Russian Idea’. The writer spoke about the ‘artistic genius’ of Pushkin, ‘of the capacity for universal empathy and reincarnation through the genius of another nation.’

This capacity is entirely a Russian, national capacity and Pushkin merely shares it with all our people; and, like the perfect artist he is, he is the ultimate expression of this capacity... Our people have the tendency to universal empathy and to total reconciliation ... the Russian spirit ... the genius of the Russian people is perhaps the most capable of all peoples to internalize the idea of the unity of all mankind, of fraternal love, of judicious appraisal, avoiding the inimical, distinguishing between and excusing differences, and eliminating contradiction.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> V. Solov’ev, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh*, n (Moscow, 1989), p. 220. (To learn more about Soloviev’s interpretation of the “Russian Idea”, see V.V. Serbinenko, *Vladimir Soloviev: The West, The East and Russia* (Moscow, 1994).



It is, of course, easy to see in these words only praise for his favorite poet and his own people. It could be regarded also as an expression of national pride. There are outpourings of praise for one's own nation at various times in history and it is entirely likely that this series will continue. Dostoevsky, in fact, did speak at Pushkin's jubilee about those traits of his people which he considered the best. It would seem that the writer who could depict in the most extreme fashion the dark side of Russian life and the national character – as possibly no one else in Russian literature could – , had the moral right to speak about what he deemed bright and positive. But that is not the issue. Having called upon Russia to be true to Pushkin's genius, Dostoevsky formulated an ideal which, in his opinion, was necessary, not only for his country and people, but for all of mankind. He did not call upon Russia to subjugate other peoples (even if under the sign of the Cross), or to enslave their minds through ideological and cultural expansion. In essence he spoke about the vast moral and historical responsibility of Russia to herself and to humankind. It was the gift of understanding another style of life, other forms of awareness of the world, which he believed was available to the Russian people, but which demanded enormous moral effort. These efforts were necessary because humankind must have the choice and cannot rest content with inevitable national alienation – or, with the law of the jungle, which operates both within each people and in international situations.

Dostoevsky repudiated the route of revolutionary socialism as he felt it would inevitably lead to a 'communist anthill'. When, toward the end of his life, he wrote about 'Russian Socialism', he had in mind that same idea of 'the brotherhood of man'.

The metaphysical ideas of Dostoevsky did not exercise a serious ideological influence on the Russian public, but this is not in the least surprising. The Pushkin speech was received with considerable enthusiasm, although this dissipated quickly. As both the Russian Western-liberals and conservatives realized, the ideals of Dostoevsky were too remote from their own ideological convictions. Nonetheless the tradition of the metaphysical understanding of the 'Russian Idea' was further reinforced. It was just this fundamentally non-ideological strain of Dostoevsky's thought that was espoused by his close friend and great Russian religious philosopher, Vladimir Soloviev. Soloviev's approach to the 'national question' was from the outset metaphysical.

"The idea of the nation is not what she herself thinks of herself in time, but what God thinks of her in eternity" Such was Soloviev's dictum, pronounced in his speech, "The Russian Idea", in Paris in 1888.<sup>5</sup> Soloviev's formulation established with utter clarity the fundamental possibilities and problems of the metaphysics of national life. He always felt that not only the individual and humanity in general, but also the people [*narod*] and the nation [*natsiia*] have a specific metaphysical destiny. Like Dostoevsky,

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, n, pp. 60-1.

Soloviev appealed to Christian universalism on the grounds that it was incompatible with both nationalism (the ideology of national egoism conflicting with the principle of the metaphysical unity of humanity) and with cosmopolitanism (ideologically diminishing the historical – and even more – the metaphysical significance of national uniqueness). Soloviev's own theme that 'the ideal of the nation is not what she thinks of herself in time' was directed against the ideology of national exclusiveness.

Like Dostoevsky, the philosopher regarded the real policy of states calling themselves Christian as in no wise Christian. He declared that those who called on Russia to be guided exclusively by national and state interests were thrusting her into imitating the worst aspects of European ideology and politics. As he wrote in his work, *Velikii spor i khristianskaia politika* [The Great Dispute and Christian Politics].

If we were to posit a national interest [*interes naroda*]... as lying in wealth and external power, then, whatever the importance of these interests undoubtedly for us, they ought not to constitute the supreme and final purpose of policy, for otherwise they could justify any evil.<sup>6</sup>

It would be absurd to discern any anti-English or anti-German attitudes in these utterances by Soloviev. Like Dostoevsky, Soloviev unequivocally condemned just such a politics of 'interests' ('political destruction of humanity') and the nationalist ideology from which it sprang.

What has been said of the politics of Germans and Englishmen does not amount to condemning these peoples. We distinguish *narodnost'* from nationalism by their consequences. The fruits of English *narodnost'* we see in Shakespeare and Byron, in Berkeley and Newton; but those of English nationalism we find in pillage and plunder the world over, in the exploits of a Warren Hastings or a Lord Seymour. The fruits of the great German *narodnost'* are in essence Lessing and Goethe, Kant and Schelling; but the consequences of German nationalism have been the coercive germanization of neighbors from the times of the Teutonic Knights until our day.<sup>7</sup>

Like Dostoevsky, Soloviev saw the meaning of the 'Russian Idea' in an 'ecumenical' duty. Both Russian history and especially the Russian national character demonstrated as much. The fundamental ideal of the people [*narod*] is the ideal of Holy Russia, affirmed the philosopher; but

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, p. 64.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, p. 65.

‘Holy Russia requires holy action’. However, unlike Dostoevsky, Soloviev felt Russia ought to take the first step to an intellectual reconciliation with the West, starting with the Catholic world. During the 1880s, dreaming about restoring the unity of the Christian world, he saw in it the possibility of overcoming national egoism. But how could the philosopher rely on such an undertaking being feasible (and that not in the remote future), having so clearly acknowledged the power of national tensions to fragment humanity and when even the most developed segments of which, in his own words, explicitly professed not a Christian politics but an international cannibalism?

It should be borne in mind that Soloviev, as a religious thinker, believed in ‘the direct action of the beneficence and work of God in history. Given such metaphysical sustenance, the moral efforts of mankind were undoubtedly capable of success in the struggle with the forces of disruption and alienation. The historical optimism of the philosopher thus drew on his own faith in Russia, that she would prove herself capable of such a moral feat and would be able to provide humankind with an example of true Christian politics.

In the struggle to attain his ideal, Soloviev suffered not a few disappointments. He did not escape utopianism. At the end of his life he was obliged to repudiate his concept of ‘free theocracy’ as unreal and in many senses utopian. His Christian messianism also seemed to falter as it was related to faith in the historic role of Russia. If in the 1880s in his theocratic utopia Soloviev assigned a role to the Russian monarchy and directly to the emperor, then the 1890s opened with a doubt, expressed by the philosopher-poet in his celebrated poem *Svet s Vostoka (Ex Oriente Lux)*:

Oh Rus! With lofty foreknowledge  
You engage in proud reflection,  
Which kind of Orient shall you be?  
That of Xerxes or of Christ?

And gradually the philosopher turned increasingly to a bitter answer, that the Russian monarchy could not attain the ideal of Holy Russia. It should be admitted also that the ideas of Soloviev were not endorsed by the Russian public. In a literal sense he found himself between two hostile camps. In official circles and among conservative traditionalists, his call for reconciliation and rejection of national egoism was adjudged anti-patriotic and hostile to the interests of the Russian nation and state. To the liberal and radical intelligentsia, also, his metaphysics of the ‘Russian Idea’ was utterly alien.

There might be ample ground to treat the ideas of Dostoevsky and Soloviev as unrealistic, even utopian, however humane. Indeed, they did not in any way alter the ideological and political situation in Russia or in the state of world politics where the ‘international destruction of humanity’

continued to flourish and inexorably led humanity to new worldwide military conflicts in the twentieth century. However, the problem was that Russian thinkers were neither ideologues who expected (as happened naively) mass and immediate responses to their appeals, nor propagators of abstract humanism, reminding humankind how much goodness and peace were to be preferred over alienation and enmity. The ‘Christian politics’ of Dostoevsky and Soloviev were not an abstract ideal, which must erase the variety of history; the latter could not flourish without conflicts and struggles, including ultimately those between national interests. Neither thinker appealed to anti-historicism. They clearly acknowledged how complex and difficult was the matching of the reality to the ideal and they were convinced that, without such attempts, mankind would lose the sense of its own existence and would find itself in a historical dead end.

Soloviev and Dostoevsky posed to Russia and the West an undoubtedly metaphysical, but for all that, concrete question: could peoples and states that have declared themselves Christian not only disregard declared religious and moral principles in their historical actions but also justify the politics of ‘international destruction of humanity’ through nationalist ideologies that are absolutely incompatible with Christian faith? And are we correct on entering the twenty-first century to regard the meanings of the problems posed by them as abstract and utopian? It seems that there can be no question of any utopianism in this case. Dostoevsky and Soloviev were speaking, not of any kind of lapse into ‘the beautiful new world’, but of the possibility and necessity of efforts to transcend rabid nationalism, to the danger of whose bloody course recent history provides ample testimony. On the other hand, having discerned the meaning of the ‘Russian Idea’ in ‘all humanity’, neither of them thought in terms of a total syncretism, the repudiation of national uniqueness and of intellectual choice, the mixing of everything in some sort of a worldwide ‘melting pot’ of nations. Indeed, they tended rather to discern a great danger in the universalism of civilizational progress as remote from the movement to the ideal of ‘all humanity’. This movement proposed the capacity to understand and respect another cultural experience and other intellectual traditions: the capacity – in Dostoevsky’s own words – of ‘universal responsiveness’, ‘of sober appraisal, avoiding enmities, distinguishing between and excusing differences, and eliminating contradictions.’ Such hopes are scarcely utopian. There is a fundamental distinction between utopian prospects and the public ideal, or, as in this case, an ideal of relations between nations.

The ‘Russian Idea’, as understood by Dostoevsky and Soloviev, and in fact by many other thinkers, did not become the basic national ideology. But that is not because it was too abstract and remote from real life. Metaphysical ideas possess their own worth independent of the degree of their ideological influence. The good shall remain good, and the truth will be the truth even when, apparently, everything originates in neither truth nor goodness. That, in any case, is how it stands from the point of view of the metaphysics of Christian Platonism, which has played a most

important role in the Russian intellectual tradition. Surely Dostoevsky and Soloviev were right when they warned that nationalism is generally a dead end for peoples and states in general and for Russia in particular.

The problem of the need of the spiritual unity of Russian society was a perennial and important theme of Russian religious philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Our thinkers reflected on and wrote about the fateful consequences of the Church schism of the seventeenth century on the national consciousness; that post-Petrine Russia was witness to the chasm between the Europeanized upper classes and the people living, as Dostoevsky said, 'in their own way, with each generation more and more intellectually distanced from St. Petersburg', from that thinnest layer of Petersburg culture. In the twentieth century G. Fedotov noted it with even greater clarity: 'Russia from Peter's times ceased being comprehensible to the Russian people.'<sup>8</sup> To many it was clear that for the multinational Russia – far from monoreligious – any attempt to formulate a single nationalist ideology through state diktat and penetrating all spheres of public life would be utterly unacceptable and pregnant with future conflict. Those who did not wish great convulsions on their country thought about this and warned against it. As Soloviev wrote:

We accept the current foundations of the state in Russia as unchangeable. But in every political structure, whether republic, monarchy, or autocracy, the state can and should satisfy, within its limits ... the demands for national, civil, and religious freedom. This is not a matter of political calculation but of the conscience of the state and of the people. And, as long as the system of coercive russianization of the borderlands shall continue in Russia on the basis of hypocritical calculation ... as long as the system of criminal penalties shall prevail over religious convictions, and that of compulsory censorship over religious thought, then in all its activities Russia shall remain morally constrained, spiritually paralyzed, and shall know nothing but failure.<sup>9</sup>

The state's effort during the last century to formulate and impose a single ideological system cannot be adjudged as other than a series of failures. The famous Uvarov's formula 'Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality' remained to a significant degree an ideological slogan, sanctioning an official ideological surveillance, but not becoming the basis of a system of values capable of uniting the various layers of Russian society. Sergei Semenovich Uvarov, president of the Academy of Sciences and Minister of Education, was a person of European education and

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<sup>8</sup> Solov'ev, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 11, p. 211.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

upbringing (Goethe rated his literary output highly). He does not bring to mind a conservative traditionalist, and still less a nationalist: 'by intellect a universal citizen', was K. Batiushkov's assessment. A typical representative of the Petersburg elite who had undergone diplomatic apprenticeship, in his ideological purpose Uvarov wanted for Russia the same nationally orientated ideology as was to be found among the other European states, that is, in Soloviev's words, the ideology of 'national egoism'. He saw the meaning of the last component of his ideological trinity, that is, nationality (*narodnost*), as lying in submission to national and state interests:

Our *narodnost*' consists in unlimited devotion and submission to autocracy; but the Western Slavs will not excite any sympathy among us. They are themselves, we are ourselves. ...They do not deserve our sympathy because we constructed our state without their assistance, we suffered and blossomed without them; they existed in dependence on others without being able to create anything; and today they have extinguished their historical existence.<sup>10</sup>

The attempt to inject a national ideology from above was unsuccessful. The problem of the psychological unity of Russian society was thus not solved; and when, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Russia entered into her phase of worldwide convulsions, ideological opposition and alienation in society played its fateful role. History tragically proved that Russian thinkers were justified in their assertion that ideologized nationalism does not have a future on Russian soil and could not become a single national ideology. In October 1917, the Bolsheviks rose to power under the banner of internationalism. And, whatever the real nationality policy of the regime during these decades, it would be simply invalid to deny that internationalism was the fundamental principle of its ideology.

In today's circumstances, there is considerable popularity for the idea that Russia may be transformed only through severe authoritarianism, which, naturally, could not propose a return to the practice of ideological diktator ideocracy. To many, such an idea seems both realistic and reasonable; in reality, however, this is a myth – yet another futile utopia. It was noted long ago that what was first a historical tragedy would be repeated as a farce. Another attempt at a dictatorship in Russia, under whatever ideological slogan, whether of the left or of the right, cannot be realized and must become a farce; although undoubtedly it would be a tragedy for the country and the people. One does not have to be a prophet in order to foresee that over the next few decades new experimenters would not possess the resources that history granted the communist regime. In

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<sup>10</sup> Nikitenko, *Zapiski i dnevniki*, i (Saint Petersburg, 1893), p. 488.

contemporary Russia there is simply no historical alternative to the formation and development of a national democracy.

The peoples of Russia have come through a complex (not a mechanical and primitive) organization of state and social life, a system of spiritual values, which would permit a genuine unity in the multiplicity of cultural-national being. Accomplishing such tasks cannot be easy or light, if only because we must find our own path inasmuch as the mechanical replication of an alien historical experience is simply impossible. But this most difficult choice appears to be, in fact, the most realistic. Having developed their own metaphysics of the 'Russian Idea', our thinkers considered that national unity was impossible without profound understanding and respect for other traditions and other psychological experiences. They believed that Russia could be successful along this path, and to me it seems they were correct.





## CHAPTER IX

# FLOROVSKY AS A PHILOSOPHER OF EURASIAN SPIRITUALITY

SERGEI NIZHNIKOV

At the beginning G. Florovsky (the “most non-Eurasian” among all Eurasians, according to S. Horujy<sup>1</sup>) was a member of Eurasian movement, but then he left the movement and joined its opposition. He considered that at first this movement was intended to be an appeal to spiritual awakening, but it failed because its representatives “have taken an interest in searching easy and fast ways”, “desire of fast and external luck”<sup>2</sup> and political problems. In fact the Eurasian movement began to be more politicized and ideological, taking the pro-Bolshevik position. Florovsky replied to this process in his article, “The Eurasian Temptation” (1828), where he opposed this trend. Researchers note that even now this work is the most thorough and critical consideration of the Eurasian doctrine<sup>3</sup>. He did not share any geosophic and geohistorical constructions which stipulated this or that material or biological origin to be the ground of the originality of the historical development of a people or civilization.

Already in the first Eurasian collection a number of political directions were presented, ranging from national Bolshevism by P. Savitsky to counter-Bolshevism by G. Florovsky. Finally ideological divergences broke the initial unity of the “mood”. And the first to be rejected – in A.V. Sobolev’s words – was G. Florovsky, “and the deepest and most significant prospects of the development of Eurasian ideas were rejected along with him”. This happened because “all attempts of Florovsky to put the most talented and fruitful forces of Russian emigration in the orbit of Eurasian spiritual and intellectual work were based on the quite understandable but unfortunate political and public immaturity of his colleagues, on their ambitions and propensity to “rule”<sup>4</sup>. Later P. Souvchinsky became a Trotskyist and opposed I. Ilyin’s participations in the Eurasian movement. He ceased to agree with Savitsky and Troubetskoy, then he misinformed and intrigued them.

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<sup>1</sup> S.S. Horujy, “Russia, Eurasia and Father Georgy Florovsky”, *Nachala* (Religious and Philosophic magazine), (№ 3, Moscow: Ed. of MAI, 1991), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *From the Past of Russian Conception* (Moscow: Agraph, 1998), p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> S.S. Horujy, *Ind. works*, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *Dogma and History* (Moscow: Ed. of St. Vladimir Congregation, 1998), p. 51.

Originally G. Florovsky joined the Eurasian manifest with enthusiasm. From the very beginning he was concerned with deep historiosophic reflections: “*Outcome to the East* is not a symbolic book with a new public direction. Its task is different, *viz.*, to raise for discussion again the cultural and philosophic problem of Russian history and the meaning of the Russian revolution, to draw attention to the problems of spiritual creativity, to wake up the fading taste to culture and pure values, not to applied ones”<sup>5</sup>.

Feeling that not all statements of the Eurasians met his aspirations, he tried without depending on words to draw others away from politics by means of his philosophical reasoning. “Eventually it is not important what Eurasians think, he wrote in a short article, “Stony loss of consciousness,” (1925), but what they think about the truth they are searching and see”. Here was also a statement for the opponents of the Eurasian doctrine: “The main misunderstanding of the dispute is just that the majority of opponents in general do not wish to search any truth, and blame Eurasians’ anxiety for their search”<sup>6</sup>.

Florovsky was not limited to criticizing the Western doctrine (as, for example, was N.S. Troubetskoy), giving crucial importance to the religious-metaphysical orientation based on a catastrophic attitude and on a vision of the historically tragic. In a certain sense his criticism of the West, nevertheless, was more thorough, compared with that of his colleagues in the movement. He tried to think over the limiting destinies of European culture, without rejecting it immediately, but trying to uncover its deep weaknesses. He considered the history of Europe “from the perspective of Christ’s cause on earth”, i.e. he thought in a religious and eschatological manner. Also, he tried to justify his colleagues because of their too complacent attitude to the Bolshevik revolution. In his opinion the Eurasians “do not accept” the revolution, but did take it into account; there is no pro-Bolshevism presented in it. In his opinion, “Russia also exists in the USSR“, and “the USSR exists hitherto just because Russia still exists”<sup>7</sup>. He considered, that the Eurasian doctrine marks a fight for Holy Russia, and tried to transfer this fight to a spiritual, religious-philosophical, historiosophical plane, but all his efforts failed.

In one of his letters, Father Georgy writes that he separated from the Eurasian doctrine in 1923, insisting on a Christian philosophy of history<sup>8</sup>. These divergences can already be seen in his work of 1921 “The Eternal and Transient in the Doctrine of Russian Slavophiles” where he opposes “false, anthropological nationalism“.

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<sup>5</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *From the Past of Russian Conception*, p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> A.V. Sobolev, “Svoja svoikh ne poznasha. Eurasian doctrine: Karsavin L.P. and Others”, *Nachala* № 4 (Moscow, 1992), p. 248.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>8</sup> S.S. Horujy, *Ind. works*, p. 29.

In the Eurasian doctrine the understanding of religious tradition, as well as the attitude toward it, varies. This new understanding and attitude brought sharp criticism on the part of the adherents of the orthodox tradition, to whom it is possible to relate G. Florovsky and V. Zenkovsky. First of all, Florovsky criticizes Eurasians for their “infallibility of history”, for their “rationality of the reality and the reality of intellect” and for their “coarse and simplified “panlogism””. In his opinion Eurasian conceptions of history contain “naturalistic morphologism”. “Eurasian historiosophy had been cast upon a morphological type”. This methodology by the Eurasians “exhausts to the bottom the sense and content of the cultural-historical problem”. This point of view can be found in the works of V.I. Odoevsky, then Gertsen (“socialism is inevitable”). In this methodology, Florovsky sees the “old biological theory of plural types transferred into the historical area”. In this way the theory of cultural-historical types was composed by Danilevsky and then Leontiev for whom “the history of mankind is biology”. Further, Florovsky comes to the unexpected conclusion that the theory of cultural-historical types was constructed for the identification and justification of national originality, and as a result, it strengthened the “sharpest substantial “monism” on which peoples become entirely dependent even before their birth. Florovsky compares this “fatal process of the development and growth of all humankind” with the “progress of a coral reef”. It is to this that the “last wisdom of historical morphology” has come. The basic problem is that “in the Eurasian morphology of historical types the problem of a Christian philosophy of history is being lost”, when “plans and types cover certain and tragic destiny”<sup>10</sup>.

The reproach to Eurasians from the side of Florovsky is that “they are busy with the morphology of Russia–Eurasia, and it takes all their attention. The geographical unity and originality of the “Eurasian” territory amazes them so much that in their conception, territory and not peoples become the original subject of the historical process and its development”<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, S.S. Horujy continues, “the Eurasian philosophy of history appeared parochial, written in the spirit of national and geopolitic discord; its quality of all-mankind which was inherent to the elder Slavophiles and which Dostoevsky affirmed as one of the main values in Russian culture also has been inevitably lost”<sup>12</sup>.

Besides that, Eurasians explain the defect of the Petersburg period in Russian history as a “break” of the government with “the people”. Florovsky does not deny this break, but considers that the break is not only

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<sup>9</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *Ind. works*, p. 314.

<sup>10</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *Ind. works*, pp. 328-321.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>12</sup> S.S. Horujy, “Life and Doctrine of Lev Karsavin”, *Intr. to art.: Karsavin L.P. Religious and Philosophic Works* (Vol.1, Moscow: Renessans, 1992), p. XLII.

there, but also in a “lack of the fear of God, moral sensitivity, spiritual humility and simplicity”. From the Florovsky’s point of view, it is necessary to make a choice not between “intellectual sickliness” and a “new national force”, but between “sinful self-affirmation and creative self-renunciation in penitential humility to the God”. “Not from the spirit, but from flesh and soil they want to take strength”<sup>13</sup>. Therefore Florovsky disagreed with the too complacent attitude of the Eurasians toward the Bolsheviks. However revolutionary the distemper and the civil war may be, for Florovsky the first necessity is to overcome spiritually what the Eurasians have failed to understand.

But the basic shortcoming of the Eurasian ideology – in the opinion of Florovsky – consisted in the consideration of “religious principles” from a “territorial” point of view. These principles for them had “the same general beginning as the beginning of “life”. As a result, the “religious principles” depending on “their places of development”, receive multiple expressions and only in a package can these “local expressions be carried out”. According to the Eurasians the “religious origins” “are included in the structure of standard cultural originality, as well as in a plurality of “local clothes”. Here Florovsky accuses Eurasians of religious relativism, an indiscriminate attitude to this thin substance- because as it turns out “all historic religions and religious forms are considered [as] equal individuations or embodiments of the general religious elements, of the same religious origins”<sup>14</sup>.

Elder Slavophiles are closer to Florovsky, as their philosophy of history is Christ-centered. The Slavophiles realized the tragedy of the West, which the Eurasians did not recognize; Slavophiles, through the name of Christ, unite Russia and the West, while Eurasians lean to the side of Asia which results in considering Russian features as orthodox. They think that Eurasians mix geographical, ethnic, sociological and religious motives. Here the religious motive is in line with denominators that end up being levelled when one forgets that the real religious-cultural border is set by Orthodoxy. Understanding the difference of beliefs, Eurasians try to set up a religious unity of Eurasia, but “in a strange way – Florovsky emphasizes – without removing sides of a belief”. Toleration by Eurasians also covers the mystical sphere, which in any way is impossible. A “seductive and false theory” of potential Orthodoxy was composed<sup>15</sup> while Orthodoxy itself was breaking apart into “many confessions”, national by type. Florovsky does not agree with the praise of paganism by Eurasians, as if, in the self-development approaching Orthodoxy, the same process should take place for Buddhism and Islam.

Completing his analysis of the Eurasian attitude to the Orthodoxy, Florovsky comes to this conclusion: “Eurasians consider and should

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<sup>13</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *Ind. works*, p. 316.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>15</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *Ind. works*, pp. 333-335.

consider Orthodoxy as a cultural and everyday detail to be an historical property of Russia. Eurasians feel the Orthodox elements; they experience and understand Orthodoxy as a historical and everyday fact, a subconscious 'center of gravity' for the Eurasian world and its possibilities. At the same time, they determine certain historical tasks of Eurasia with reference not to this 'center', not from alive [living] Orthodox and cultural consciousness, but from reflections of a theosophical, ethnic, state and organizational character... Thus in their consciousness Russia turns into the Heritage of Chengis Khan. Thus Russia is removed from the "prospect of Christian history, the christened world", and the "Byzantine inheritance" to be covered by a "Mongolian" heritage<sup>16</sup>. No place for Church remained; there was place only for the state with the church when the latter was overloaded with secular content. Florovsky reproaches the Eurasian "blood and soil doctrine", i.e. only the territorial part, but not the spiritual. Apparently, the spiritual soil doctrine is possible only through the depth of orthodoxy.

Thus, instead of the Eurasian geosophic concepts of geophilosophy and geohistory, Florovsky put forward opposite principles of spiritual creativity, eschatological historicity and all-humankind, because for him the national spirit was not given biologically, but created historically through transcendental belief. By this he was approaching the line supported by Dostoevsky and V.I. Solovyov.

V.V. Zenkovsky in his work *Russian Thinkers and Europe* (1926) writes that the Eurasian plan for creating the "Orthodox culture" "was pretty narrow and poor", as it had been limited by Eurasians to a reconstruction of the "Orthodox way of life", "a certain national confession", which in no way satisfies the idea of Orthodox culture.

Additionally, due to the fact that the pathos of the Eurasian doctrine is in the struggle against the West, there is "completely no attention to the experience of Western Christianity". In this connection the Eurasians "stand as though in a historical desert...". Thus N.S. Troubetsky considered that the European culture is not common to all mankind. "European culture is the product of certain ethnic group history to which they give a form of universal culture with no reason". Zenkovsky sees the error of Troubetsky and of the Eurasian doctrine as a whole in that they have not realized the "universalism of the Christian ideal" which is present in the grounds and the whole life of West-European culture and which is not identical to cosmopolitanism. In the opinion of Zenkovsky, there is no chauvinism in claims of Europe for the development of a universal culture, because the "ideals which inspired and are still inspiring European history, have not a local, but a universal, character"<sup>17</sup>.

Zenkovsky concludes that the Eurasian doctrine cannot live with the hatred against the West. But his attempt to work out a positive ideology,

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 336-337.

<sup>17</sup> V.V. Zenkovsky, *Russian Thinkers and Europe* (Moscow: Respublika, 1997), pp. 83-84.

based on the concept of “Orthodox culture”, remains but an attempt. Zenkovsky considers, that in general Orthodoxy had been adopted in the Eurasian ideology only superficially and accidentally.

According to S.S. Horujy’s modern research, Eurasians had a “plebeianised materialistic approach to spiritual problems, related with their predilection for simplified plans”<sup>18</sup>. This “inborn and patrimonial defect of the Eurasian doctrine” could not be removed by formal statements urging adherence to Orthodoxy. The Eurasian methodology has resulted in its originality being interpreted “in general, in material categories, being reduced down to ethnic and geographical factors. Thus orthodoxy was seen as a local or tribal cult”<sup>19</sup>. Florovsky also tried to resist this tendency to plebeianize the spiritual problematic.

On the basis of the analysis carried out, it seems possible to verify a negative attitude on the part of Orthodox philosophers to the Eurasian plan. A large part of their criticism is objective, but many things come only from confessional or monoreligious arrangements while the Eurasians tried to overcome the limits of a rigid religious direction, taking into account the fact that Russia is a polyreligious and intercontinental state. Meanwhile Florovsky considered the essence of the Eurasian doctrine as not contradicting his religious outlook. Emphasizing that the fathers’ doctrine is the single true basis, he noted, that “antiquity in itself does not prove validity”. The tradition of the fathers for him does not consist in a constancy of ceremonies and customs: tradition is a blossoming establishment, and the Church should not be limited by the letter. Theology is not a “science”; it should be addressed to the “vision of belief”<sup>20</sup>. This is the essence of “the neopatristic synthesis” of Florovsky.

For him the Eurasian doctrine is not just a collection of political slogans, although political realization may be a logical consequence of the developed philosophical concept. Florovsky proceeds from a “primacy of culture above the public”, considering that at the basis of all there should be belief. In this connection he considered philosophical reflection instead of political force to be the most important national question. “Either we can revive culturally and rise in spirit, or Russia is already lost”, he asserted in 1921. Thus he proposed naming the Eurasian movement not a political party, but the “league of Russian culture”<sup>21</sup>.

In this connection Florovsky aspired to present the deep essence of the “Eurasian” outlook for setting up a consciousness oriented to personal responsibility and a creative comprehension of life problems that should result in the “internal regeneration” and salvation of Russia. He considered the Eurasian idea to be a “true nationalism”, not political but spiritual,

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<sup>18</sup> S.S. Horujy, *Russia, Eurasia and Father Georgy Florovsky*, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> S.S. Horujy, *Life and Doctrine of Lev Karsavin*, p. XLII.

<sup>20</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *Dogma and History*, pp. 377, 381.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

because “the nation is a spiritual beginning”<sup>22</sup>. As spiritual matters are based on unconditional respect for the person, Florovsky tried to avert the Eurasian movement from Bolshevism (at the same time recognizing the historical necessity of revolution), but, alas, in vain. This finally brought the movement to degeneration. Florovsky considered the Eurasian ideology to be on a plane of “true nationalism” which could not be connected to Bolshevism.

Thus Florovsky called for the development and realization of the Eurasian idea not with political activity, economic reconstruction or restoration of the state, not even hypostasising the nation, but with the spiritual revival and cultural renewal of the person. Thus “the person should be the original criteria directing the task of cultural creativity”<sup>23</sup>.

Seeing that the Eurasian movement included rather multidirectional thinkers, An Orthodox philosopher, Florovsky tried to accent the positive that could unite all of them. He did not aspire to put forward any dogma as a uniting beginning. He put forward a general spirit, characterized by a fundamental rejection of positivism, narrow rationalism and chiliastic historicism.

His theory of progress was panned by his critics for its naive, “poor-spirited and corrupted” belief in “immanent expediency”. He called such a position and understanding of historical developments the most “irresponsible” and harmful mood of spirit. He claimed that the “intuitively ‘tangible meaning’ of life could save, but not ‘the logic of history’ and ‘spontaneous–inevitable process’”. This historical progressivism grew on the ground of “rationalistic optimism” and generated a rational “philosophy of history”. Therefore, Florovsky subjects to rigid and deep criticism the guiding ideas of German classical philosophy from Kant to Hegel, which had formed the basis for various forms of social utopianism.

In stating the Eurasians’ ideas Florovsky did not take responsibility for the overall movement. He admitted that he expressed his own opinion exclusively and did not include his colleagues in the “Outcome to the East” collection. He understood the given manifesto of the Eurasians as calling for a discussion on the cultural-philosophical problem of the sense of Russian history, drawing attention to the problems of spiritual creativity, and awakening aspirations to culture, to true values, instead of imaginary ones. It was not his fault that his words appeared to be a “voice in the wilderness”. Maybe this call will be heard and creatively interpreted by descendants in the future.

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<sup>22</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *From the Past of Russian Conception*, p. 126.

<sup>23</sup> G.V. Florovsky, *Dogma and History*, p. 128.





## CHAPTER X

# LIMITS OF EURASIAN METAPHYSICS

*ANATOLY SEMOUSHKIN*

It is commonly acceptable to speak about Eurasian philosophy without determining its limits as a philosophy. It is presupposed that it has the right to be treated as one, as if in it, we would deal with thought that complies with the usual canons of philosophical knowledge. But without comprehending and revising the philosophical aspects of the Eurasian movement, we risk discussing it without its philosophical thematic. This is not a matter of doubting the philosophical aspect of the Eurasian doctrine, which certainly contains a typical philosophical frame of mind and which could not have come about outside of this historical and philosophical context.

The problem is to reveal this attribute and describe it in its individual spiritual and historical expression, and on this basis to certify the structure and intrinsic core of the Eurasian doctrine as a philosophical doctrine. While it is inconceivable outside the history of philosophy, it is conceivable in the context of non-philosophical knowledge (for example, in history, ethnology, ethnography, linguistics, geography). Indeed it is conceivable that after reading Eurasian texts someone can feel confused: if this is philosophy, then why is it different from the traditional form of philosophical consciousness. In other words, the problem is not in the presence of philosophy in the Eurasian doctrine; rather, the problem is in the lack of clarity about the line between the philosophical and the circumstantial realities in their theoretical constructions. A certain designation of this line is necessary as a pre-condition for any conversation about what is called the philosophy of the Eurasian doctrine.

The Eurasians seem to love using the term “philosophy“, without setting stable borders for its meaning. This can be understood in particular if one takes into account that the protagonists and leaders of the Eurasian movement (N.S. Troubetskoy, P.N. Savitsky, P.P. Souvchinsky), with all their scientific–theoretical talents, were not professional philosophers or philosophers by “divine mercy”. Neither definitions of philosophy, nor explanations and interpretations of its nature and intrinsic center can be found in the Eurasians’ texts. Naturally, they were disposed to a free and uncritical use of the term philosophy. As a rule, according to the Eurasians, it is a question of philosophy in its relation to something different, but never of philosophy in relation to itself. In their understanding it was as if it was devoid of a speculative identity and self identity.

Almost all the researches and projects by the Eurasians, let alone the manifestos and the programs, are devoted to history, ethnography, and geography. But independently these sciences – in the opinion of Eurasians –

were not capable of comprehending the planetary sacrament of human culture. Therefore, higher theoretical disciplines like “historiosophy”, “ethnosophy”, “geoSofia” were built over them; and claimed the rank of philosophy.<sup>1</sup> But to identify all these disciplines with philosophy is no more correct than to consider as philosophy Lamarque’s doctrine on the evolution of species (in his *Philosophy of Biology*) or the doctrine of Carl Linnaeus on the origin of plants and texture (in his *Philosophy of Botany*). If a zoological or “botanical philosophy” existed, then it must be thought in the same way as philosophy in its application to the specified sphere of empirical reality. Consequently, we have the right to strive for recognition of what philosophy is in itself, in its cognitive principles and intensions prior to their application. Otherwise the primary function of philosophy is understood by the Eurasians in the simplified positivist version of A. Comte: philosophy is like an autocrat over the full range of human experience; its regal essence and purpose is to generalize, order, strategize or plan out the whole of personal-scientific knowledge.

In the Eurasians’ understanding, sometimes philosophy loses all connection with the axiomatic content of philosophy, and then it must be equated to something that is only similar to philosophy. So, N.S. Troubetskoy, contrary to all expectations, found philosophy in Moscow Russia, as if it had existed there not in the form of a conscious speculative system of the Western type, but as an implicit “residential confession”, effective in its life-building function. This would be a “subconscious philosophical system”, borrowed from the Turan mental turn and a displacement of the Greco-Byzantine passion for abstract philosophizing in the Russian soul.<sup>2</sup> Because of the specific character of the Turan mentality, N.S. Troubetskoy thinks that the Turkic people – in particular, the Mongols and the Turks – gave rise to no outstanding philosopher or theologian similar to those of Europe. The philosophy noted by N.S. Troubetskoy in the medieval Moscow state is reduced not to reflection about a solution to the riddle of life, but to the exemplary cult of godliness, for which, as a rule, spiritual–practical work toward the truth is preferable to its speculative search. With all the originality of the ancient Moscow orthodox spirituality, it is impossible to agree with an inadmissible and artificial procedure for rethinking the cult as an object of philosophy as such, with its freedom of intellectual self-suppositions, its doubts, – and never with a final solution.

Thus, philosophy in the Eurasian doctrine has no disciplinary independence and is understood either as an attribute of generalized thinking (it takes only an honorary place among other sciences), or as an attribute of the cultic orientation of consciousness (it moves closer to, if not identifies with, religion). But the unnatural and consequently illusive

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<sup>1</sup> N.S. Troubetskoy, “To the Problem of Russian Self-knowledge”, *The Heritage of Chingiskhan* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 93-102.

<sup>2</sup> N.S. Troubetskoy, “On Turan Element in Russian Culture”, *Ibid.*, p. 136.

relationship of such different and irreconcilable concepts as metaphysics and ideology is confusing in the Eurasian appearance of philosophy because in the context of the Eurasian idea they are almost synonymous. Here the borders of philosophy as sovereign knowledge are eventually washed away, and one can be at a loss to determine whether it is philosophy or a benevolent attempt to be such.

Reconciling metaphysics and ideology is similar to reconciling the freedom of personal thought and the need to have a collective belief. But this logically inconceivable, but practically feasible synthesis is, according to the Eurasians, the warranty of the viability and authenticity of their outlook. The problem is to rehabilitate the tarnished reputation of ideology, remove its label of “false consciousness” and oppose a “true ideology” to all mistaken ideologies in earlier times. That true ideology would be “undoubtedly, i.e. absolutely, justified in its sources”.<sup>3</sup> These sources, as can be guessed, should be sought not in the utopian ingenuity of individual minds (ideologists) and not in the interests of any group of people (class), but in the essential basis – the transcendental dimensions of existence comprehended by metaphysics. Thereby metaphysics has a role that is traditionally alien to its mission – that of a servant for the implementation of the ideological project of Russia, namely, the Eurasian revival. The attempt to cross-breed ideology and philosophy (metaphysics) arose at the expense of the latter. No matter how the Eurasians criticized Marxist ideology, their doctrine would remind one of a Marxism turned inside out; the reproach of “Slavophil Bolshevism”, thrown up by their opponents, verifies in all its eccentricity a schematic relationship of the “true ideology” with the ideology of Bolshevism. In both cases the program of a happy arrangement of humankind was proposed. The difference was only in the selection of fundamental axioms of existence which set the rules (including ideological ones) for the world game. For the Marxists these rules are a natural necessity and the invariable laws of the essence; for the Eurasians these rules are in the supra-natural which providentially guides the world with normative rules and goals.

Actually Eurasian philosophizing is limited to developing an ideology which would be reasonable in the sense of metaphysics. One is not likely to consider this attempt as successful if the antinomy of the theoretical and the practical could be resolved within the limits of a demonstrative and consistent philosophical system. The European experience of their coordination, especially in the ethical rationalism of Socrates, and in the transcendental idealism of Kant, revealed the futility and hopelessness of such claims. The attempts to reconcile the rational-theoretical and value-practical antinomies without any damage to philosophy failed: either the practical consciousness is transformed within rational conceptualization – and thereby loses its specificity (as it does in Socrates), or the theoretical consciousness weakens philosophy and makes

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<sup>3</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 23.

it lose the capacity for a positive metaphysical discourse (as it does in Kant).

The question here lies less in the miscalculations, personal predilections and errors of separate philosophers than in the problem whose insolubility is comparable only to an infinite experience of its solution. Any theory looking for a reconciliation of thought as supposing and will as declaring encounters a fatal incompatibility. As a result, the attempt is pushed back to the starting point of the phenomenologically obvious contradiction. Without doubt the Eurasians have come to this result: they have had less success in overcoming the “concept–value” antinomy than their predecessors have. Therefore if there is any reason for discussing the meaning and achievements of Eurasian philosophy, it needs to be done with reference to the undue familiarity with which Eurasians displace the invaluable experience of traditional ontology and gnoseology from the philosophy they create. In terms of the logic of ideological expediency, they regard all of this as a lifeless, intellectual obscurantism – at best a dreaming of the truth rather than using it as an instrument for individual and national creation. The Eurasian movement, from the moment of its foundation, has been focused not on searching for the truth, but on the practical (national-historical) result of its utilization, and consequently “there was nothing to do here for obscurants and gnosemahs”.<sup>4</sup>

When V. Ilyin qualifies the Eurasian world outlook as a “universal system” based on a reliable and authentic basis<sup>5</sup>, his statement is perceived as no more than an assurance or declaration of intention. Anyway, we cannot find such a system in the Eurasians. This not only because such a system, apparently, is thinkable only as a cherished and attractive purpose to which philosophy is called to aspire without any guarantee of achieving it, but also because the Eurasians’ philosophy – in particular, its metaphysical components – is unlikely to be acceptable as a collective product of the work by philosophers because the Eurasians do not agree among themselves. All of them are united by a sauterne or blended science of Russia, namely, the national-ethnic idea that they developed to save Russia by understanding its cultural–historical originality and its world applicability.

However, this unity of attitudes, beliefs and expectations has turned out to be insufficient for philosophical mutual understanding. And that has predetermined the divergence among Eurasians in the interpretation of metaphysics and the metaphysical basis of the required “universal system”. Already in the first Eurasian collection of works, *The Outcome to East. Presentiments and Fulfillments. The Consolidation of the Eurasians* (1921), which is a kind of a doctrinaire manifesto of the movement, the articles are characterized this way: “they were written by the people, thinking

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<sup>4</sup> V. Ilyin, “The Eurasian Doctrine”, *Stoupeni* (Steps), No.2 (1992), p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> V. Ilyin, “Social Goals and Dignity of the Eurasians”, *About “The Eurasia” newspaper* (Paris, 1929), p. 21.

differently about some problems”.<sup>6</sup> Taking into account the Eurasians’ ideological and patriotic identity of ideas, it is easy to guess, that under these “some problems” they meant the fundamental problems of philosophy concerning metaphysical bases and their creative–causal relations with the historical and anthropogenic process.

This is only that intersection of speculative interests where all philosophers and metaphysicians agree with the statement of the problem. But the point where they disagree inevitably is in the method for understanding the problem – and particularly in its solution – because the cognitive approach to the transcendent is directly proportional to the reduction of the circle of persons who try to make this together. The dialogue with the transcendent is personal by default and has no witnesses even among one’s cohort. Hence, a thinker participating in this dialogue, cannot obtain the authority of the absolute truth without the “help” of efforts that are of a confessional-ideological or organizational-dogmatic character.

Metaphysics as the method for justifying and ensuring the position of Eurasian philosophy in an integral outlook has been understood by the Eurasians “differently”. This different understanding is in spite of the fact that their common and constant confessional dispositions (Orthodox-Christian) apparently did not stipulate any difference of opinion in this regard. If what is meant here is that while at least some thinkers accepted the religious-theological doctrine of Christianity in general, they nevertheless claimed the freedom to make metaphysical judgments, then, there is nothing unexpected in all this. This circumstance affected the status and destiny of the Eurasian “true ideology” as a uniform system of principles and statements.

The irreducibility of metaphysics (philosophy) to ideology and scientific knowledge was manifest almost immediately after the registration of the movement as an organization (1921). During the whole period of the development of the classical Eurasian doctrine (until 1929) there was a clear right of way: the speculative (philosophical and theological) and the “applied” (scientific and ideological) in the Eurasian ideological complex. At first glance, the metaphysical potential of the Eurasian philosophers (G. Florovsky, Vl. Ilyin, L. Karsavin) developed based on the ideological-political and the cultural-historical strategy of the movement. The metaphysics and belonging to the Eurasian doctrine seem not to fit with each other: G. Florovsky, drawn towards a speculative divinity, rejected the pseudo-scientific “naturalism” and “geographical determinism” of the Eurasian leaders; Vl. Ilyin left the Eurasian organization over disagreement with the pro-Soviet intonations of the “true ideology”; L. Karsavin completed his “metaphysics of Christianity” before he became a Eurasian

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<sup>6</sup> *The Outcome to East* (Moscow, 1997), p. 45.

(1926), and this had only an indirect relation to his “phenomenology of revolution” of the Eurasian period.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless there are serious reasons to speak of a Eurasian metaphysics – at least, about the metaphysical intuitions within the framework of Eurasian speculation. For a historian of philosophy it is interesting and instructive with regard to the typology of philosophical outlooks and the evolution and destiny of the doctrine, which had the boldness to attribute a function to metaphysics. In all probabilities, the function of ideological service was contrary to the nature of metaphysics. In any case, it would be interesting to trace the motives of the Eurasian bent to update metaphysical thinking and to correct the deformations which traditional metaphysics underwent. Their efforts can be viewed as oriented to bringing metaphysics into accord with the Eurasian conceptions.

The Eurasians do not claim the authority of innovators and pioneers. They understood their desire to update the thinking of the times, and they induced a ruthless and unalterable “revaluation of all the values” because of the fact that, in their opinion, the “decline of Europe” had already happened. The Western idea, they believed, had finished its creative mission along with a “decrease in the soul” of European culture, and the decline of the great philosophical systems of 19th century.<sup>8</sup> Philosophy could continue to exist under only one condition: it should overcome western norms of thought and be revived on the basis of new prerequisites and goals. Only then would it be able to meet adequately the challenge of the upcoming “organic epoch” which augured a new cultural experience and new horizons for philosophizing. According to the ideological beliefs of the Eurasians, in Russia the “dawn of a new philosophical epoch” was breaking with its pre-dawn glow. Having listened to its suggestions, recommendations and requests, one must obey them and “understand the bases of the new scientific and philosophical world outlook”<sup>9</sup>.

But, as it turned out, it is impossible to “compose” a metaphysics around, or contrary to, a collective speculative experience without attempting both the inconceivable and the impossible – namely, acknowledging a pre-world beginning and a mechanism for the integration of the global process. In such cases the Eurasians felt an inevitable connection with the metaphysical tradition and they could not avoid the obvious or implicit continuity with it, despite their aversion to Western philosophy. This continuity is especially unambiguous in the Eurasians’ attitude to the metaphysical systems of the past, where the causal dependence and the absolute beginning of the entire natural and human world order (which an absolute beginning stipulates) were justified from a monistic point of view.

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<sup>7</sup> See the Russian Archive (Vol. V. Moscow, 1994), pp. 475-497.

<sup>8</sup> “The Eurasian Doctrine (Experience of systematic presentation)”, in P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

Because of this, the “ideology” of Hegel and Schelling attracted the Eurasians; they called it a “forerunner” of the new world outlook and attitude to life.<sup>10</sup> According to their speculative systematization, the Eurasians designed a worldview for the new epoch, which they understood as an indispensable “organic unity in idea”. The method of its construction and layout is understood also in the image of the “vegetative” vocabulary of German metaphysicians: its logic of the genesis of the system for a new world outlook is “similar to a plant growing from the seed and a self-disclosing of the main idea, required internally”.<sup>11</sup> However they think that the “ideology” of the German metaphysicians “remained unclear” or was perverted into the Marxist materialistic monism and consequently that it would require transformation to satisfy the requirements of the “new philosophical epoch”.

Selected by Hegel and Schelling “the path from idea to life “was recognized as correct and [was] fully accepted by the Eurasians. But the digressions of the idea to life, the “divine” to the “earthly”, as well as the practical results of this digression (for example, the Prussian state system by Hegel) did not satisfy the Eurasians. This is because in the doctrine of the German metaphysicians, elements of the Gnostic (evolutionary-compulsory) ontology and rationalistic scholasticism prevailed. This is attractive to individual minds, but it does not lead one toward the “conscious, strong-willed activity” of a person in society. For the Eurasians it was important that the absolute beginning was not given enough thought and that it was explained only in the sense of gnoseology, but also had a vitally significant value. It should have the authority of an unconditional relic requiring religious worship and prescription, based on the rights of the “categorical imperative” and the norms of human will and behaviour. In other words, the absolute beginning (*arche*) should have the prerogatives of spiritual authority dictating the parameters of pre-eternal truth and the way of their realization on earth. Only with such an assumption would the absolute beginning be what it should be according to the logic of the “true ideology” by Eurasians: it was not simply an absolute idea which they could know or not know, but the “idea-ruler” which would transform the person as an observing and contemplating creature into its voluntary and practically active “subject”.

From this point a subconscious–sympathetic bent of the Eurasians for that type of world outlook becomes clear. It reminds one of the sacral versions of primitive tribal cosmogonies; there the pre-eternal beginning acts not only as a cosmos-creating impulse, but also as a command, which programs the life of the people. It also fulfills the roles of a model to follow and a guardian of the tribal unity. The only difference is that instead of the divine “prologue on the heavens” (as a rule, it is personified), the Eurasians

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<sup>10</sup> “The Eurasian Doctrine (Experience of systematic presentation)”, in P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

have “a ruling, absolutely indisputable main idea”<sup>12</sup>, which predetermines the scenario of natural and historical process. In addition, instead of the tribal community, there is the Eurasian unity of peoples and nations. It is clear, that the Eurasians do not address directly the reconstruction of the archaic mythic picture of the world; nor do they copy it. It is rather a matter of archaic intention looking for the same picture that is found in the mythic-poetical dialogue of “top” and “bottom” – a dialogue that connects creativity and faith, understanding and will, divine “word” and human “work“. The results of this contact between the divine and human is the goal, which the Eurasians try to achieve and bring closer under their project of an ideology that is justified in the sense of a metaphysics or “believing philosophy” (Vl. Ilyin).

The Biblical model of the absolute beginning and its relation to the world and person is the main guiding line and prototype of Eurasian ideological metaphysics, because “only the Bible has the final meaning”.<sup>13</sup> In all this the Bible is not being considered as the guide for action, and particularly not for thinking: to recognize the authority of the Bible does not mean to follow its statements automatically. More likely, it should be perceived as the most suitable and reliable key to the comprehension of the ultimate truth and mystery, and it is enough not to bypass it. “The final meaning” does not come from a literal reading of the Bible text that is encoded there and can be retrieved by scientific, philosophic and theological exegesis. A Biblical metaphysics is a system not of concepts, but of symbolical judgments and mythic symbols, which require transmission to the language of rational understanding and discourse. As Vl. Ilyin expressed it, the Bible is first of all “a question, instead of an answer”.<sup>14</sup> The answer is heard by the one who masters the bible key for a solution of the mystery of unity and of the divine and the human. The Eurasian doctrine declares its readiness to solve this problem within the project of a “true ideology“.

Additionally the Eurasians keep a distance with respect to the Bible and not only in an exegetic sense. Like everyone who has thought about the religious structure of the Bible, they are confused by the heterogeneity of its parts. The Judaic layer, in particular the Torah, can least of all be subject to transformations in the required Eurasian direction. The Old Testament concept of God offends the Eurasians by its excessive and persuasive anthropomorphism. They cannot accept the Supreme Creator; and the idea of a vindictive and retributive judge is unacceptable to them. The Old Testament’s creative abilities do not correspond to the idea of providential wisdom: in the act of creation of the world and person there is more arbitrariness and demonstration of power than are charity and grace.

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<sup>12</sup> “The Eurasian Doctrine”, in P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> V.N. Ilyin, *The Six Days of Creation* (Paris, 1991), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.



Moreover that Judaic Yahweh, being national in his origins, could not claim the role of absolute beginning, who could set his protection over the multinational Eurasian Continent (Russia).

On the contrary, the Eurasians considered the religion of the New Testament as the ideal material with which to form a metaphysically reasonable ideology. This is not only because of the historical tradition of the Russian Orthodoxy, but also because of the metaphysical opportunities, incorporated in Christianity – in particular for solving the problem of the interrelation between the Absolute and the Relative; God and the human person. In the Judaic religion, God and the human person are separated and could not meet each other; God always remains inaccessible to the human person: they are connected only by the divine law and the human obligation to follow that law. In Christianity, “the Deity is connected with humankind and therefore is known and accessible only to it”. The God-Man idea of Christianity is the basis of the metaphysical claims of Eurasians to create a project of absolutely authentic and “true ideology”. But this is the subject of a separate study.



## CHAPTER XI

# EURASIANIST MOVEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

VASILIIY VANCHOUGOV

The popularization of the Eurasian doctrine includes politicians and philosophers – with the latter being not concerned with party affairs. This doctrine is sometimes treated in intellectual circles as a complete philosophical doctrine with a geopolitical orientation. This article describes the results of my attempts to reveal the philosophical aspects of the movement to popularize this doctrine: Did the classical Eurasian doctrine have an original philosophy, or was it a synthesis of various ideas – including philosophical ideas – that were created in accordance with the development of the movement. When they attempt to reanimate a dead movement, it is necessary not to trust, but to verify. Alekseyev said in his article “The Eurasians and State” (1927), “We have not only the program, but we are united by the doctrine, collection of dogmas, whole outlook, whole philosophy”<sup>1</sup>. Is this true? History teaches, if not to politicians then to philosophers, that declarations often decorate a movement, rather than reflect the actual state of affairs.

The “classical Eurasian doctrine” I understand as an ideology proving the need to construct a “Russia–Eurasia continent”, which had been developed with the participation of the Russian emigrants during the period from 1921 to 1929. As to the general character of the Eurasian doctrine, I proceed from its understanding as a social–philosophical movement oriented toward creating an alternative ideology in the field of party and state construction for a post-imperial Russian space.

Theoretically the Eurasian doctrine was declared in Sofia in 1920 when N.S. Troubetskoy published his book *Europe and Mankind*. In 1921 a collection of articles was published, *The Outcome to the East. Premonitions and Fulfillments*, which became a manifesto of the social and philosophical movement that arose in emigration. N.S. Troubetskoy (1890-1938), P.N. Savitsky (1895-1968), G.V. Florovsky (1893-1979) and P.P. Souvchinsky (1892-1985) were the founders of the Eurasian movement. Afterwards, in Berlin, were published the collection *On the Ways. Strengthening of the Eurasian Doctrine* and one year later, *Russia and the Latinism* and *The Eurasian Chronicle*. The next publications of *The Eurasian Chronicle* were in Berlin (1925) and Paris (1927). During this period about twenty authors participated in the Eurasian editions. In addition to the authors mentioned above, L.P. Karsavin, G.V. Vernadsky, V.N. Ilyin, P.M. Bitsilli, etc., published on behalf of this movement. Some of the founders broke with the

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<sup>1</sup> *The World of Russia–Eurasia* (Moscow, 1995), p. 180.

movement, but others took their place as the leading ideologists. At various times and on different occasions each of the participants made programmatic statements concerning the doctrine as a whole or its separate parts.

To create a “Russia–Eurasia” continent, at least in the imagination, its founders would require the help of philosophers. Among the leading participants of the Eurasian movement, G.V. Florovsky and L.P. Karsavin were philosophers by training and occupation. The first soon broke with the movement, and the second joined it several years later. At the time he joined the movement Florovsky was a relative “beginner” in philosophy and articulated his thought with the help of the Eurasian movement. In contrast, Karsavin at the time was already known as the author of books: *The Petersburg’s Nights*, *The East, the West and Russian Idea*, published in Petrograd in 1922, *The Philosophy of History* published in Berlin, in 1923, and *On the Beginnings* (1925). While Florovsky was expressing himself by using the Eurasian movement and maintaining its form, Karsavin managed not only to introduce an abstract philosophical terminology into the Eurasian doctrine but also shaped the destiny of the movement. His influence turned out to be not speculative, but real – his philosophy of “the continent” played an important role in its destruction, even as the intentions were antipodal.

G.V. Florovsky’s professional philosophical activity began not long before his emigration. Having studied philosophy at Odessa University in the faculty of history and philology (1911-1916), he worked there as a privat-docent from 1919. A year later he had to leave Russia. The first stop was in Sofia, Bulgaria. His joining the Eurasian doctrine was dictated primarily by academic, not political, reasons. Thus, according to the *Letter on the Eurasian doctrine adressed to P.B. Strouve* (1921), Florovsky explained his cooperation with the Eurasians, as follows: at the moment “cultural and philosophical reflection are much more important and essential for national affairs than the current political struggle”<sup>2</sup>, and the Eurasians were going to be engaged in such reflections. However, when he noticed that the participants of the movement were more interested in politics, instead of metaphysical speculation or even a geopolitical orientation, he quit the movement at a meeting in Berlin in 1923. In general he found himself in the position of a deceived scientist, who had been offered a position in a Communist Party committee and not in the academy.

But the other philosopher, Karsavin, was not at all frightened off by the Eurasians’ political activity. Joining the hierarchical structure later than others, a person quite often becomes an outsider, and not a leader. L.P.Karsavin (1882-1952) joined the Eurasians in 1925, and by 1926 he already acted as one of the leading theorists of the movement. In Paris he held a “Eurasian seminar” with his “Russia and Europe” lectures as the basis. Having no less a speculative mode of intellect than Florovsky,

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<sup>2</sup> *The World of Russia–Eurasia* (Moscow, 1995), p. 180.

Karsavin at the same time showed more interest in practice, and he was easily transformed into a political thinker in response to the tasks facing the movement. This does not mean that he tried to adjust the One to the Eurasian ideology, though his system is characterized by its responsiveness to all phenomena. The spectrum of the problems, addressed by Karsavin as a political thinker was completely different, ranging from the speculative *Basics of Politics* to the interpretation of the Soviet regime in terms of its practicality for philosophy.

As already noted, the Eurasian doctrine was a social and philosophical movement. What could it borrow from philosophy to solve the problems of the construction of the “Russia–Eurasia continent”?

While for the party mechanism and the Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union the Eurasian doctrine was just another plot of the “White Guard”, for the Eurasians the Soviets were in a position for state construction, and hence could be used to realize their own idea. This belief was so strong that one of the Eurasians expressed confidence: shortly they will manage to turn Bolsheviks into their allies, and party sections will be transformed into Eurasian clubs! The Eurasian doctrine, like Bolshevism in the Soviet Union, was a new view of Russian and world history, a new project of the global order. “The Eurasians are representatives of a new beginning in thinking and life”, said P.N. Savitsky, one of the Eurasian doctrinal leaders. While the Kremlin thinker, V.I. Lenin, was deducing formulas for the ideal “Sovdepiia” continent (“Socialism is Soviet power plus electrification of the entire country”), the Eurasian leader was trying to find a clear formula for the masses. So in 1925 Savitsky, in his article “The Eurasian Doctrine”, wrote: “...the Eurasian doctrine takes into account the impossibility of explaining and clarifying the past, present and future cultural originality of Russia by means of primary reference to a “Slavdom” concept; as the source of such originality it specifies a combination of “European” and “Asiatic-Asian” elements in Russian culture”<sup>3</sup>. The “plus” in Lenin’s formula related him to the pseudo-Pythagorean Eurit, who expressed the essence of the doctrine of the divine Pythagoras by means of filling in the contours of a human body by a number of counting stones. Savitsky in his combination of the “elements” went up to the level of a Eurasian “natural philosophy”. But the leading role in this virtual history of philosophy was allocated to the “Socrates” of the Eurasian movement, i.e. to Lion Platonovitch Karsavin.

The program, based on recognizing such “combinations” of elements, meant a synthesis of all spheres, the creation of organic constructions in all fields of knowledge and national economy. For the Eurasian movement that required not simply a “regular” privat-docent of philosophy, but a thinker like V.S. Solovyov. Karsavin turned out to be such a person (even looking like Solovyov), and despite troubled times he consistently developed his own version of a unifying metaphysics. He had

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<sup>3</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 85.

not only a metaphysics with a “council as a subject” which could be interpreted both as a parish, and as the new community of the Soviet people, but also a “philosophy of history” – as well as a balanced position with respect to “philosophy’s publicism”. The discussions on “the symphonic person” were a bit unwieldy – it could not be understood by everybody, and sometimes it could not be recognized even by such leading members of the movement as N.S. Troubetskoy – and some passages were not just difficult to understand but even hard to pronounce. Nevertheless, his skill in “philosophy of history” was highly appreciated by the Eurasians. To change accents in world history is not mechanically to color contour maps as a geography lesson. That the Eurasian doctrine is a “philosophy of history” had been stated not only by P.M. Bitsilli<sup>4</sup>, but also by each of the movement participants during the existence of the movement. The majority of the Eurasians – from the co-authors of the manifesto to the authors of monographs on philology – claimed the role of historiosophians. But in the person of Karsavin they had a sophiologist, capable (as will become clear from his article concerning the “philosophy of the C.P.S.U.(B.)”) to be a sophist from time to time, whose art could be appreciated even by the editors of such a magazine as “Under the Banner of Marxism”. However no matter in what banner a sophist is wrapped, he will seek his own benefit. Thus, with regard to the above qualities, Karsavin was an ideal candidate for the position of leading philosopher in the Eurasian movement. However, it must further be noted that although without Karsavin this movement would lose much, still he would remain but a philosopher without the Eurasian doctrine. For example, in 1929 Karsavin published the work *On the Person*, which stated his metaphysics of overall unity, proceeding from the interests of metaphysics, instead of the essential tasks of the Eurasian doctrine. Thus he was more academic, like Florovsky, who left the movement due to its deviation to the political.

“The Eurasian doctrine includes a grain of aspiration for general philosophical truth”, Savitsky asserted in his article, “Two Worlds”<sup>5</sup>. Since the death penalty of Socrates, many have sworn allegiance to the “aspiration for the true”. However to give form to the collected material, we shall try to reveal the Eurasians’ attitude to those “aspirations for the truth” which could be observed among philosophers in pre-revolutionary Russia, the Soviet Union, and Europe as it received the emigrants. Thereupon we shall try to find the reasons for preferring or denying the Russian historical and philosophical process and the philosophical idea of West and East (Europe and Asia) from the side of the Eurasians.

Despite the declared “Outcome to the East“, the religious and philosophical concepts from Eastern culture were not at all used in the Eurasian schemes. Only N.S. Troubetskoy, raised the question: “Is a

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<sup>4</sup> P.M. Bitsilli, *Two Faces of the Eurasian doctrine* (1927); *The Russian World–Eurasia* (Moscow, 1995), p. 341.

<sup>5</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 113.

synthesis between Christianity and mysticism possible?” in his work, *The Religions of India and Christianity*; and thereby addressed the dominant philosophical doctrines in the “East”. However, for Troubetskoy, a Christian “during all epochs of religious development in India has felt the breath of Satan”. Thus, any religious and philosophical synthesis is out of the question; and accordingly, the attitude of the Eurasians to such a doctrine as theosophy, could be only negative. Thus, during the geosophic and historiosophic “outcome” to the East, the Eurasians uncovered no sources – as far as philosophy is concerned. That was better, because it left more freedom at the time to create a new philosophical system. As to the “Western” philosophy, the leading ideologists of the Eurasian doctrine were again quite laconic. The best traditions of an influential part of the Russian criticism (from Khomyakov to Ern) limited “Western” philosophy to “rationality”, which is undoubtedly to be overcome by means of spirituality. Reviewing the Western philosophers individually, in “The Ways of Eurasian Doctrine” (1929), Karsavin had admitted K.Marx to be the closest of all European thinkers<sup>6</sup>. But the affinity with this thinker, in particular, brought an end first to the Eurasian doctrine, and then to Soviet philosophy. The latter looks especially ridiculous: the doctrine of Marxism with the help of which they wanted to explain everything, turned the state and its ideology into nothing – into “something from the history of philosophy”. Nevertheless, this is not a property of Marxism, but a revenge for its absolutization.

While highly interested in the philosophy of history, the Eurasians did not have their own concept of the history of philosophy. The reason for that lay not only in the small number of philosophers among the Eurasians, but also in the fact that it was a *social* movement, where politically oriented leaders used philosophy with a number of other means, from denunciations to publishing houses as their tool, the history of which is far from being its most important part. Even as they felt a serious “need” for philosophy, the movement’s leaders considered its essence – namely, the dialectics – not as a method, but only as a symbol or bright “slogan”. So Savitsky admitted that dialectics, “a favourite word of the Eurasians”, is for them a “symbol and a word”<sup>7</sup>. It would have been better if they liked the method, for then the way would have been different.

Only a fragment from the whole historical and philosophical past of Russia has been used by the ideologists of the movement. Discussing the harbingers of ideology Savitsky declared in “The Eurasian Doctrine” (1925), that “it is necessary to recognize all the thinkers represented in the Slavophil school, including Gogol and Dostoyevsky as philosophers and publicists”. But the same Savitsky widened the circle of predecessors – chronologically and thematically – so that the Eurasians “in a number of ideas” turned out to be “successors of the powerful tradition of Russian

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<sup>6</sup> *The Russian World–Eurasia* (Moscow, 1995), p. 300.

<sup>7</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 98.

philosophical and historiosophic thinking”. At the beginning there were not only the early Slavophiles (19<sup>th</sup> century), but also “a number of the works of the Old Russian writing, the most ancient of which are attributed to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> through the beginning of the 16th century”<sup>8</sup>. With a little more effort, “The Anthology of 1073” could be listed as a primary source. However, I would explain the period of the pre-Eurasian doctrine with quite different reasons – namely, the more radical the movement (whether the Eurasian doctrine or postmodernism), the more deeply did its ideologists try to go into the past so that they could open the way to the future. In this process of discovery of “predecessors”, observers were amazed not at the long standing of theoretical developments on which the movement was based, but at the boldness in the interpretation of texts from the past by new ideologists.

Trying to be not only agreeable with “tradition”, but also terminologically in accord with Russian religious philosophy, Savitsky offered the project of a “good metaphysics” for the world. “The Good metaphysics” is the sphere where “the highest” and “the lowest” religious and philosophical values and economic and political action are in an established balance, where the economy and law are approved in the full breadth of their vital value”<sup>9</sup>. In such a compressed form “the good metaphysics” of Savitsky is in accord not only with “The Philosophy of Economy” by S.N. Bulgakov, but also with “The Philosophical Origins of Integral Knowledge” by Solovyov. It is unlikely that Savitsky ever read these works, but he had an opportunity to join the tradition with the help provided by more erudite confederates in philosophy. Florovsky, for example, had been amazed more than once by the fact that the information obtained by Savitsky during an evening conversation with him became known the next day by the world as the ideas of the movement’s leader. But if ignoring author’s rights was bad for the scientific world, it was good for the party organization because the more confidently the leader appropriated other’s ideas as his own, the faster the ideas could become the common property of the members of the movement. “Academism” is not included in the definition of charisma in the context of politicized movements, but sometimes a really charismatic personality – without an academic degree or school certificate – can create a volume of work for several generations of academicians.

Because the empire conceived by the Eurasians was a third way of development in the civilization space across Europe and Asia, the Eurasians were guided in their ideology by a “middle way” policy. They had decided to go between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, the Whites and Reds, between pure Slavophiles and authentic Westerners, between abstract theory and meaningless practice. This synthetic way was planned also by Savitsky in

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<sup>8</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 84.

<sup>9</sup> P. Savitsky, *Two Worlds.*; P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 122.



the field of philosophy. So in “The Eurasian Doctrine as a Historical Plan” he represented the intellectual trajectory of his movement with these positions: “The philosophy of the Eurasian doctrine is exactly that of the organizational idea. From materialism, in its classical version, it is sharply delimited, as from any abstract idealism...The Eurasians differ by their completely exclusive attention to matter, and even [by] a special feeling for it. Not without reason, they are often blamed for “geographical materialism”, historical materialism, etc. But a matter with which they deal is that [which is] filled with ideas, it is matter in which the Spirit breathes”<sup>10</sup>. In other words, the philosophy of Eurasian doctrine according to Savitsky is nothing but idealistic materialism; it is evidently the Russian Idea as it has materialized in its leaders. The concept he used for the “organizational idea” recalls not only the “Common Cause” of Fyodorov, but also “The Tectology” by Boghdanov.

Having found the resolution of problems in all spheres with the help of the middle way method, checked by time, the Eurasians nevertheless made an exception for their own rules. So atheism turned out to be not a “subordinated” and overcome moment in the Eurasian “dialectics” i.e. a state of spirit remaining in the expanse of history during the movement. It is not even a minor element in the new system. As the idea turns “to the Holder of those ideas with which the universe lives, the philosophy of Eurasian doctrine has a religious completion”. They know that “the Russian philosophical idea and those of other peoples of Eurasia will reach an unprecedented and adequate height, when again the religious inspiration blazes in the vast expanses of Eurasia after the tests are passed”<sup>11</sup>.

Proceeding from the idea of the “Middle”, Florovsky dreamed (“On Righteous and Sinful Patriotism”, 1922) of a development of a philosophy which would combine, in Kireyevsky’s words, “Western erudition” with the “spirit of orthodox and Christian love for wisdom”<sup>12</sup>. The tendency to go by the median brought some of the Eurasians to a rapprochement with systems of ideas like the “philosophy of a common cause” and Marxism, which in its “efficiency” proceeded from the contrary – from atheism. In “The Ways of the Eurasian doctrine” (1929) Karsavin declared, that N.F. Fyodorov had played a considerable role in the self-disclosure of the spirit of Eurasian doctrine. “The philosophy of the common Cause” turned out to be for its adherents “the key, which opened for us the true content of our own philosophy”.

The Eurasians are not “Fyodorov’s followers”, and, in the central idea by Fyodorov, it is necessary to see just a “great myth”. Nevertheless it is possible to recognize him as their teacher. But rapprochement with

<sup>10</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 112.

<sup>12</sup> G. Florovsky, *From the Past of the Russian Idea* (Moscow, 1998), p.

Fyodorov's ideas brought them near to the recognition of the congeniality of their views with K. Marx's doctrine. Here the attraction was not only to "his colossal theoretical power for the concrete historical masses, . . . a superhuman fervent orientation of ethics and political will, but most of all, [to] its orientation to action like Fyodorov's, as well as to philosophy that is acted instead of merely thought". That is why Marx's words: "Till now philosophers interpreted the world in different ways, but the fact is how to change it". Fyodorov could say this, and it was entirely accepted by the Eurasians. Determining the level of their sympathy for the thinkers mentioned, the Eurasians declared, that although they were "Marxists to a lesser extent than Fyodorov's followers", and both "Fyodorov and Marx should be overcome", "in the dialectics of any future of the Eurasian doctrine, they will remain as moments of critical importance. The Eurasian doctrine should completely open what Fyodorov and Marx treated not fully, but one-sidedly and thereby unproven – i.e. the idea of the *Common Cause* and the idea of world creation as canceling the world view"<sup>13</sup>.

Marx's thesis has been taken by Savitsky, who in "The Eurasian doctrine as a Historical Plan" added the following: "There is no doubt that explaining the world in a prescribed way, it is possible to aspire to change it. The Eurasians explain the reality around them and at the same time pose the problem of changing it"<sup>14</sup>. The sympathies of some the Eurasians for the "common cause" of Fyodorov and Marx's doctrine were shown by the practical character of their philosophy. Thus, one could conclude that philosophy helps to build a new "continent", but that this "continent" was not being built for philosophy. Still, many have seen this as a political degradation. Finally N.S. Troubetskoy in his "Letter to the Editors" (1929) declared, that "the newspaper *Eurasia* in the issues published up to now, had reflected only one of the trends in the Eurasian doctrine, and that it tended to replace orthodox Eurasian ideological positions with elements from other doctrines as Marxism, Fyodorov's school, which had nothing in common with the Eurasian doctrine"<sup>15</sup>. So they began to remove "alien" concepts from the Eurasian ideology. Then they began to expel from Eurasia such elements as individuals and tribes, which in general, would eventually become part of the "Soviet Union".

But what was proposed in turn by Troubetskoy? In the letter to P.P. Souvchinsky (1927), without referring to names, he expressed a sharp rejection of Karsavin's philosophizing within the framework of the Eurasian doctrine:

When they reproach us, that we do not have any system,  
but just a mechanical mixture, a muddle of completely  
different, non-cohesive ideas, from which everyone could

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<sup>13</sup> *The World of Russia–Eurasia* (Moscow, 1995), pp. 299-300.

<sup>14</sup> P. Savitsky, *The Continent of Eurasia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 98.

<sup>15</sup> *The World of Russia–Eurasia* (Moscow, 1995), pp. 300-301.

pick out one that was suitable – these reproaches are correct. For sure, by means of slender casuistry, metaphysical mist and a juggling of convenient, but absolutely empty, philosophical concepts like overall unity, it is possible to reconcile the most contradictory concepts and create the appearance of a system. But that will not fool anybody. A sensible plain man can see that it is dishonest<sup>16</sup>.

In general the formulation was softer than the practice of “investigations” for deceiving comrades as it was accepted in the Soviet Union. But several years earlier the viewpoints of Troubetskoy corresponded with the ideas of Karsavin, and the point of contact was the doctrine on person – “personology“. Troubetskoy had less “mist”, and the main idea appeared like dew drops on the tree of knowledge at sunrise on the “continent of Eurasia”. In 1927, one can find both the doctrine on the “community person”, and the project of personology in Troubetskoy’s “On the Problem of Russian Self-knowledge” and in Karsavin’s “The Basics of Policy”. Karsavin proceeded on the premise that the policy should be based “not on individualistic and materialistic preconditions and hypotheses nor on ineffective relativistic ones, but on the philosophical doctrine on the person (prosonology, or personology)”. Also, only on the basis of the doctrine of person can one clarify “the nature and structure of the subject of culture as a community person, the nature of statehood as a form determining personal life of that subject and the organic structure of culture, the sense of spiritual and material creativity of the culture-subject”<sup>17</sup>.

But before proceeding with the analysis of Troubetskoy’s personology, it is necessary to review briefly the problem of terminology, because in the history of philosophy we have two terms of similar meaning – personology and personalism. In terms of phonetics [or etymology – *Ed.*] “logy” pertains more to “person“, but we shall consider which of these directions is closer to the Eurasian doctrine, if not to the truth. What is personalism? In Germany the activity of William Stern (1871-1938) comes under this category. In *Person and Object* (“*Person und Sache*“. Bd.1-3, Lpz., 1906-1924) he proposed a system of “critical personalism”. In France personalism was related to Charles Renouvier (1815-1903), who published his book *Personnalisme* in 1903.

The next stage of the French personalism is related to the *Esprit* magazine, the founder of which was E. Mounier, the author of *Personalistic and Community Revolutions* (1935) and *The Manifest of Personalism* (1936). N.A. Berdyaev was in direct contact with the representatives of French existentialism. The magazine and its context were similar to the views of Berdyaev, who at that time was in a continual evolution from

<sup>16</sup> Is quoted as in “*The Beginnings*” magazine (1992, № 4), p. 56.

<sup>17</sup> *The World of Russia–Eurasia* (Moscow, 1995), p. 111.

Marxism to personalism. Moreover, as has been declared by Berdyaev, “This trend of French young people was obliged to me in many respects” (*The Self-knowledge*). After visiting the first meeting devoted to *Esprit*, Berdyaev was pleasantly surprised that “the young people had demanded that the magazine protect person and humanity” (He was as amazed with this requirement, as if the demand was put at a meeting in a concentration camp!). Young employees of the magazine sympathized with “personalistic philosophy“, the most radical representative of which Berdyaev named himself, and his version of the doctrine was called “commutant personalism”. In 1920 R.T. Flewelling (1871-1960) began to publish *The Personalist* magazine in the USA. Flewelling was a follower of pastor B.P. Boun (1847-1910), one of his works was named *Personalism* (1908). In 1931 Flewelling published his book *Creative Personality* in New York.

In Russia personalism began to develop in the shadow of German philosophy after the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The German, Teichmuller, who worked in Russia at Derpt University, was the first young transplant. Y.F. Oze was one of the followers and his doctoral work was *Personalism and Projectivism in the Metaphysics of Lotze*<sup>18</sup>. Thus, originally interest grew from the themes proposed by the Germans, and was not warmed by the tragedy of existence, as it was later warmed by Berdyaev. Personalism in Russia is a theme little studied. The difficulties in determining the problematic of personalism become deeper also because of its terminological character. Thus, for example, Kozlov in referring to personalists, called this doctrine “pan-psychism”. The founders of new versions of monadology, Astafyev (“critical monadology”) and Bougayev (“evolutionary monadology”), also were referred to as personalists. Nevertheless, in general the essence of Russian personalism is the doctrine of the person’s spiritual substance. Because of this, within the framework of that doctrine, such problems as the inter-relation of the part and the whole, elements of the “lowest” and “higher” levels were discussed. Also the relativity of such concepts as collateral subordination and consent, hierarchy and community, person and collective were taken up. In Russia it is acceptable to refer to Kozlov, Bobrov, Lopatin, Lossky and others as personalists.

As has been already mentioned, Berdyaev referred to himself as a personalist as well, and published in *The Way* his article, “Personalism and Marxism” 1935, p. 48), and in 1939 he published the book *On the Slavery and Freedom of the Person: The Experience of Personalistic Philosophy*<sup>19</sup>. Berdyaev contrasted his personalism to the “hierarchical personalism” which was represented in his opinion by G.V. Leibnitz, V. Stern, N. Lossky

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<sup>18</sup> “Memoir of the Yuriev University. Attachment”. 1893-1896; Review of this work by E. Radlov: *The Magazine of the Ministry of National Education* (1896, Part. 307, Sep.).

<sup>19</sup> N.A. Berdyaev, *The Empire of Spirit and Empire of Caesar* (Moscow, 1995).

and partially M. Scheller. From Berdyaev's point of view, "hierarchical personalism" contains an internal contradiction which [actually] changes it into "anti-personalism". Berdyaev could not accept the statement of the doctrine that the world, arranged hierarchically, consists of persons from different hierarchical levels, and that each person is subordinated to a higher level "as a subordinated part or body". The person belongs to only one hierarchical level which consists of persons representing the lowest levels. The nation, humankind, space – all can be considered also as "persons" of a higher level. Not only can communities or collectives be recognized as persons, but "any real unity" may be considered as a "person" also. Within "logical personalism this should be considered to [be in] conflict with the essence of the individual". Berdyaev's version of personalism "moves the center of gravity of the person from the value of objective communities such as society, nation, state, collective – to the value of a person. But he understands the person in deep contrast to egocentrism, which destroys the person"<sup>20</sup>. According to Berdyaev's plan, personalism "can be only communitarian" (*Ibidem*). Thus, in Berdyaev's classifications, the Eurasian personology – in particular that of Karsavin – is a version of "hierarchical personalism". So in general, without going into details on the Eurasian personology it is clear that they were inspired neither by Berdyaev and not by the followers of Mounier or the American personalists; the Eurasian doctrine on person in its problematics is close to the Russian personalism.

N.S. Troubetskoy also used the concept of a "symphonic person" and popularizing personology. Nevertheless he gave more attention to the need to create a system of sciences on its basis. In the 1927 article, "On the Problem of Russian Self-knowledge", he confirmed that one of the most important concepts at the basis of the Eurasian doctrine was the concept of person, and that "philosophical, historiosophic, sociological, and political sides of the Eurasian doctrine were created on this concept"<sup>21</sup>. Because of its "integrity and originality", the person cannot be known by the human mind. Nevertheless it can and should be a subject of scientific and philosophical study. The general laws of the person's existence and the person's attitude to the world and other individuals, and the empirical forms displaying both a person in general and a particular person can be studied. The complex of sciences should be engaged in understanding all of this, and a special science about the person – personology – should serve as the coordinator.

However, as Troubetskoy notes, "Actually this science does not exist so far". All scientists working should understand that their personal work is only a part of a general research whose subject is "the given specific multihuman person in its physical environment". Because of this orientation of scientific consciousness it will be necessary to coordinate and

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> E.N. Troubetskoy, *History. Culture. Language* (Moscow, 1995), p. 105.

understand the results obtained by individual sciences. This will result in the following: along with the “descriptive” scientific research there will be research “interpreting” the actual material, i.e. along with the historical research there will be “historiosophic” ethnographic, “ethnosophic” geographical and “geosophic” research. From the collection of the works of interpretation there should arise a special “theory of the given person”. Because the center of all theoretical and applied researches is the concept of person, all of them should be coordinated with each other and together construct a unified system of the sciences to be subordinated to personology.

But with this the task of the Eurasian movement to construct a systematic world view is not yet settled: “The idea of the person, being dominating in the system of sciences, is not limited by the sciences only but it becomes an initial point for a system of philosophy beyond their limits. Also the idea of person is called to play the most important role in the theological system, where its nature finds a final opening. Thus, instead of an encyclopedia as an anarchical conglomerate of scientific, philosophical, political, aesthetic, etc., ideas uncoordinated with each other, a harmonious and coordinated *system of ideas* should be created with which the *system of practical actions* should comply”.<sup>22</sup>

This orientation toward practical actions was declared repeatedly by the Eurasians. Savitsky, expressing the spirit of the doctrine, proclaimed that the Eurasian doctrine is “not only the system of historiosophical or other theoretical doctrines”, but an aspiration for “combining an idea with action” (“Eurasian doctrine”). The Eurasians from the very beginning had this increased interest in practice, but practice for a social and philosophical movement is politics. Karsavin wrote *The Fundamentals of Politics* (1927), but the Eurasian’s had a new political system not by this work, but by his “philosophical” understanding of the Soviet Union.

During the period of the rise and disappearance of the classical Eurasian doctrine abroad (1920-1929), the Soviet power had not yet set a closed circle of philosophical dogmas and a list of canonical texts on the basis of which it would be possible to teach the masses and punish the dissidents. *The Brief of the C.P.S.U. (B.) History*, with its section “On Dialectic and Historical Materialism” was published only in 1938; *Under the Banner of Marxism*, its own philosophical journal, was published practically simultaneously with the first theoretical declarations of the Eurasian doctrine in 1922. From 1924 to 1930 in the Soviet Union there were discussions between “dialecticians” and followers of “mechanism” among Soviet scientists and philosophers on the authentic understanding of Marxism. Each of them stated: “Autos epha!” Thus for many people an illusion was created that in the Soviet Union the discussions among representatives of the humanities, natural sciences and party officials had the character not of a search for philosophical truth but at least for a true

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<sup>22</sup> E.N. Troubetskoy, *History. Culture. Language* (Moscow, 1995), p. 109.

understanding of one philosopher, K.Marx. That was philosophizing, even as it was done with limited means.

In 1929 in the *Eurasia* newspaper, which had been accused (within the movement) not only of an excessive philosophic devotion, but also of pro-Bolshevik deviation, there was an interesting discussion on the value of the C.P.S.U. (B.), the All-Russia Communist Party (Bolsheviks) policy in the field of philosophy. Two philosophers took part in this discussion – L. P.Karsavin and A.V. Kozhevnikov, known in the West as Alexander Kozhev (1901-1968) who in four years would become a professor at the Sorbonne. Though I lack the information to figure out the reasons for Kozhev's statements on such a problem in this Eurasian newspaper, we shall discuss the viewpoints proposed by the participants in this discussion.

Kozhevnikov was the first with his article "Philosophy and the C.P.S.U.". Although it seems paradoxical, it was given a "positive mark" by the C.P.S.U. (B.) policy. His reason was: In the Soviet Union philosophy was not prohibited, although only one materialistic Marxist form existed; nevertheless this is propagandized by the new regime. At the same time, this form of administrative intervention can be justified "on the basis of the interests of philosophy". Kozhevnikov thought that, however flat and elementary the "uniform and unique" system permitted in the country, because of its uniqueness, it is not able to prevent the appearance of real philosophy. Those who are not satisfied with this system – and only they – could claim to create something really new. But it is impossible to be led into the temptation of the philosophically "free" West. The options were to pass from one ossified system to another – this had "lost its attraction" – and "to be amused by empty formalities during an eclectic game with meaningless concepts"<sup>23</sup>.

At the same time Kozhev considers philosophy in the USSR to be "not so elementary", and to have something "valuable in itself". But even if it would be an "elementary" phenomenon, the usual conditions play a positive role in the development of philosophy. That is why everyone, who

will welcome the formation of a really new culture and philosophy – whether it would be not Eastern, Western, but Eurasian, or simple because it would be new and alive in contrast to the already crystallized and stiff cultures of West and East – should accept all that promotes this formation (*Ibidem*, p.74). By virtue of this, for the time being, it seems to Kozhev that "the C.P.S.U. policy directed against the bourgeoisie, i.e. finally against Western cultures, is nevertheless a preparation for this new culture of the future. (*Ibidem*, p.74).

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<sup>23</sup> *The Problems of Philosophy* (1992, N 2), p. 74.

The argumentation of Kozhev is based on inquisitorial logic: they tell the truth only under torture. When not subjected to torture, everyone speaks whatever he thinks. That is why true philosophy is born only under political pressure on the idea. If, according to Hegel, the world reason was a “cunning fellow”, then in Kozhev’s interpretation it already acts as a “fiend”.

Karsavin made a statement concerning Kozhevnikov’s article. But before considering Karsavin’s arguments, it would be desirable to remember some viewpoints on the mutual relations between creativity and political restrictions stated by domestic thinkers. For example, during the Nikolas I epoch of censorial oppressions, philosopher Nadezhdin wrote with envy: “Among all peoples the Greeks especially shine in the history of [the] formation of humankind. Their *civil freedom* and resulting from it *freedom of thought* (italics mine—V.V.) in particular, the division of Greece into areas, the variety of mutually opposite schools, the happy talents of the Greeks, their travel to other countries, the location of Greece and its climate assisted the prosperity of philosophy”<sup>24</sup>. But Nadezhdin’s contemporary, Pr. V.F. Odoevsky, noticed on another occasion that there were various actions in different tribes and, on the contrary, the same phenomenon could be caused by quite different conditions. So, it was possible to come to the conclusion that in one country freedom of thought comes from civic freedom, while in another country freedom of thought is caused by the lack of freedom.

Karsavin believes, that “the idea develops and becomes free, when it is being oppressed and persecuted in every possible way”<sup>25</sup>. He agrees with Kozhevnikov and considers that “it is time to give up the powerless and vulgar belief of the Russian intellectuals, which had been adequately expressed in these known verses: “Violence and oppression over the free idea are not welcome by God. And I think,” Karsavin continues, “the big misfortune for my own philosophy (but, certainly, not for my everyday well-being) is that I am living not in Russia, but in relatively free countries” (*Ibidem*, p.76).

In Karsavin’s opinion, philosophy in Russia did not become original and distinctive just because there was freedom of verbal and printed philosophizing in pre-revolutionary Russia. The reason why the Russian philosophers “have not noticed” the origin of Russian philosophizing, is their voluntary “slavish attitude to European philosophy”; “the free idea” immediately revealed its freedom by becoming entirely dependent on Europe”. As a result all the work done by Russian philosopher-experts should be included in the history of European – mainly German – philosophy; Russian philosophy in its most significant works is “Russian only by the language in which these

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<sup>24</sup> *The Essay of History of Philosophy as by Reingold* by F. Nadezhdin (SPb., 1837), p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> *The Problems of Philosophy* (1992, N 2), p. 76.



works are written, that is, they have the same translation". "Because of a voluntary refusal of freedom by the Russian philosophical thought (and what is the external oppression by the Bolsheviks compared with this?) in favour of Europe, until recently the originality of Russian philosophizing is inversely proportional to the erudition and scientific discipline of the person philosophizing" (*Ibid.*, p. 76). The final conclusion by Karsavin is: it is necessary to evaluate positively the fact that the "artificial" pressure by the power of the revolutionary process had been transformed into "natural" pressure. Thus philosophy has an opportunity to develop because its struggle for freedom becomes real for the subject. But thereby the philosophical problems were being defined and concretized. Until now these problems had remained abstract and lifeless and, therefore, were subject to determination from outside, i.e. from Europe. Karsavin's conclusion is similar to a final speech of any professor during a faculty meeting at the Institute of the Red Professorate:

It discussed the "last things", the end of the world, and nowadays it turns out, that it is still far not only from the end of the world, but also from human culture. In front of Russia and humankind there are new and very specific tasks. Writing about the orthodox idea of life transformation had come to the dead-end of individual self-improvement, and now there is a reorganization of social and political life, certainly more modest than the transformation of all of reality, but incomparably more specific... Reality is more specific and also poses more concrete tasks.<sup>26</sup>

So by 1929 they started to represent a speculative "Russia-Eurasia continent" as a phenomenon visible to the whole Soviet Union, and Soviet professors of philosophy could be admitted to the ranks of the Eurasian movement. Some of the Eurasians preferred to re-evaluate the "practice" of Soviet structuring, because nine years of philosophizing on the occasion of their own "continent", with no real work, could transform "Russia-Eurasia" into a myth similar to "Atlantis" by Blavatskaya or "Shambala" by the followers of Rerikh. Years later, Karsavin regretted that he "lived not in Russia, but in relatively free countries" this became the basis for fantastic changes in his life. He was arrested by his compatriots; he released Europe from fascism, and died in a post-war camp on the territory of the Soviet Union.

Leaving aside the analysis of the external reasons for rapprochement with the Eurasians and being based on only a retrospective view, it is possible to say that the Eurasian doctrine, at the time Karsavin

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

joined it, could be seen by him as a kind of geopolitical analogy of overall-unity. The Eurasian doctrine could be seen as a movement with the help of which the principles of the metaphysics of overall-unity would become the practice of state and cultural organizations. Living in Paris, it would be easy to imagine, that instead of “*Capital*” in village reading rooms they would summarize “*The Philosophical Origins of Integral Knowledge*“. However, in the end, the most speculative parts of the Eurasian doctrine have become a philosophy for the nonexistent “continent”, while the real continent, named the Soviet Union, is easily managed with the imagined philosophy. While the Eurasians were developing personology, a “cult of personality” was being formed in the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, some features inherent in “Soviet” philosophy became apparent in the Eurasian movement: with the help of the philosophical categorical tool of the global social doctrine taking a selective approach to the history of philosophy. Philosophizing within the Eurasian doctrine has not resulted in a Eurasian philosophy. Eurasian doctrine became an intermediate form between the Russian religious idea and Soviet philosophy: an intermediate form, but not an intermediary. The Eurasian doctrine was not able to “feed” Soviet philosophers with ideas from pre-revolutionary philosophy (“overall-unity”, “council knowledge”, “middle path”). It was not required for the new regime which could perceive the Eurasian doctrine as only a display of the “idealism of the minority”. The Eurasians wanted to be in the vanguard of Russian religious culture and, simultaneously, at the rear of Soviet philosophy. However, since the Soviets perceived the given movement not as opponents, but as enemies, the Eurasians lost the “war” not only at the “invisible front” (Efron’s transformation into an agent of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), but also at the “philosophical” front. Instead of a metaphysics of overall-unity on the area allocated by the Eurasians for the organization of the “Russia–Eurasia continent”, the principle of the “material unity of the world” triumphed; and instead of a “symphonic personality”, the “Soviet people” stepped out into the social arena. The Eurasians operated within this space, having forgotten their authentic frame of mind. While they were refashioning Fyodorov into a Russian Marx, and Marx into a German Fyodorov, the militant followers of “Marxist Leninists” in Russia were ready to kill everybody for the welfare of future generations. On the one hand, this was “Soviet Marxism”, the “philosophy of common cause” was on the other.

But today after the breakdown of the Soviet Union and when the principle of the material unity of the world is being given in the history of philosophy textbooks as one of the cases of “absolutization”, would this mean that the time for metaphysics as of overall-unity of the Eurasian type has arrived? Returning to the question raised in the beginning of this article, it is possible to say that the Eurasian doctrine did not have its own philosophy. It had only a project of a philosophy which accepted as basis some positions from the history of Russian pre-revolutionary thought. That

was sufficient for philosophizing within the imagined “continent”, but not for changing reality in accordance with the principles of its own ideology. Thus, the Eurasian philosophy is a philosophy only of an imagined state, where imagination plays the main role. However in contrast to the authors from other imagined worlds, such as Blavatskaya, Rerikh, Daniel Andreyev, etc., they were sober-minded ideologists, and the products of their imagination is a logical continuation. The Utopian founders, whether Plato or Thomas More, were such as these. The “Russia–Eurasia Continent” is a similar utopia, and the taste for unrealized Utopias becomes stronger when economic and geopolitical opportunities are narrowed and reality is apprehended as anti-Utopic. As antithesis they recollected the thesis in apprehending reality. This is how the increased interest in classical Eurasian doctrine can be explained in modern Russia. It is a collective memory, not a reasoning; instead of synthesis there is nostalgia.



## CHAPTER XII

# IMPERIAL DIFFERENCE AND RUSSIA AS A SUBALTERN EMPIRE OF MODERNITY

*MADINA TLOSTANOVA*

The closing years of the 20th century brought forward an enormous interest in the problematic of modernity, with its redefinitions and reconceptualization in every part of the world. This re-mapping has been performed from various epistemological positions – Western postmodernism, postcolonialism and, lately, so called global studies. This has de-centralized the overarching perspective of European modernity itself. The deconstruction of Western modernity from “within” has been accompanied by its deconstruction from the position of modernity’s absolute and non-absolute others and – most importantly – from the borders and intermediate positions. It would seem therefore that Western, non-Western and not quite Western variants of modernity should be considered in a more complex way with regards to both colonial and imperial differences that have always functioned inseparably in modern history, and also with regard to the specificity of modernity/modernization in various locales.

Imperial difference refers to the power differential between empires, e.g. Western capitalist empires of modernity and the liminal “under-modernized”, not-quite-Western ones (Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, Russia); while colonial difference refers to the power differential between empires and colonies. Both colonial and imperial differences imply the notion of border thinking/epistemology as one of the consequences of the differentiations and interplays of local histories and global designs (Mignolo 2000).

The interplays of local histories and global designs tell the story not of empires in themselves or in comparison with other empires, but at their intersection (territorial, political, economic). Borders, instead of territories, become the focus of research as well as of the epistemic perspectives from the colonies, that open up the ways to a more general, trans-modern (Dussel 2002), view of world history. The noted Argentinean philosopher, Enrique Dussel, defines the concept of trans-modernity as a project, emerging from the sites and positions of “omitted potentiality” and “altered exteriority”, as a “beyond”, creatively overcoming the project of Western modernity itself. The space of these multiple cultures subdued by western modernity produced a varied “reply” to the modern challenge. Dussel calls the reality of that fertile multicultural moment “trans”-modernity (since “post” modernity is only the latest moment of Western modernity) (Dussel 2002: 221).

In this emerging rewriting of world histories, locale has remained virtually untouched in contemporary global, postcolonial and certainly Western postmodern discourses of modernization. It is the former “Socialist World” that had been homogenized and demonized during the Cold War, and then it simply vanished from the picture of the new world order for most theorists in the field. The image of Eastern (or Central) and South Eastern Europe and Russia, together with the ex-Soviet republics should not simplistically be taxonomized as a frozen Eastern Block because each of these geopolitical regions has had a multiple, varied and rich imperial and colonial history, as well as diverse languages and religions, inter-related in complex ways, that generated specific variants of modernity.

That is why Russia offers a particular case in the map of empires, colonies and modernity, and allows one to focus on the imperial and the colonial differences within the context of alternatives to theories and practices of modernity and border thinking. Russia is a Janus-faced empire, with one “face” always directed toward Western capitalist empires (in Tzarist Russia, in the Soviet Union and today), and a completely different face looking at its colonies, former colonies and many satellites.

The imperial difference between Orthodox Russia and Western Christian empires largely defined Russia’s specific role in the history of Western capitalism as marginal, seriously behind and not always successfully mimicking the Western imperial models. The 1917 Revolution changed the face of the empire and redrew the imperial difference, transforming it from an ethnic and religious configuration (Orthodox Slav) to the confrontation of the two ideologies of modernity—liberalism and socialism/communism. Thus, the variegated spectrum of colonial differences with subjugated ethnicities and religions, generated by the expansion of the Russian Empire in modernity, was transformed into the ethnic and national characteristics in the Soviet Union. The collapse of the latter confronted Russia with the need to negotiate and re-define both its imperial difference with the West and its colonial differences with the ex-colonies. The brutal opening of Russia to capitalist modernity and the redevelopment of the war in Chechnya are some of the examples of this historical disarray and the urgent need of new socio-historical conceptualizations from the borders and from the cracks in the former homogenizing epistemic and ideological perspectives.

Although the Russian/Soviet empire has seemingly received all the attention it deserves in the works of both Russian and Western scholars, most of them are strictly historical descriptive or openly propagandistic. This can be explained by the complex interaction of many imperial political, cultural and national myths upon which the interpretation of Russian history is still largely based, as well as by the difficulty in distinguishing mythology from reality stemming from the continued generation of myths.

Historiography as an essentially positivist “science” is hardly capable of conceptualizing this complex phenomenon without treading

upon trans-disciplinary areas. There is no objective history, indeed no history without interpretation. For this reason the imperial/colonial configuration of Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet empire is interesting mainly not in its descriptive aspects, but rather in its main features of cultural imaginary, semiotic models, cultural meta-metaphors, and general geo-historical and geo-cultural logic, which altogether enable one to refer to the uniqueness of Russia as an empire.

The study and interpretation of this model, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, can be done from various positions: from the seemingly objective position of social sciences, from a Eurocentric philosophical and historical perspective, from the perspectives of experts in area studies, from the position of universal history in the variants of Hegel or Marx. It can be done also from the borders and the fringes of epistemic perspectives that have been denied by the universalizing trends just mentioned in their imperial anxiety to account, describe and explain the world from a detached, objective point of view of an infallible and omniscient expert. The last border position, not aspiring to absolute objectivity and finality, seems to be most fruitful. In the case of Russia, it would be the position of its internal other – in an ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious sense – an epistemic standpoint de-centered in relation to the disciplinary and canonical principles of Western epistemology and its Russian variants. Scholarly and intellectual life in Russia in the last two hundred years can be characterized by a constant effort to adapt successfully Western models of the social sciences and humanities – efforts which resulted also in a “nationalistic” critique of “foreign” ideas. Neither position offers a way out, while a politics of mediation and ternary strategies has not yet become a common practice in Russia.

The politics of mediation implies an understanding of Russia in a double differential of power: the imperial differential with the West and the colonial difference between Russia and its colonies. Any scholar of the Russian empire then must constantly take into account the many elements playing in this complex and unique model. Its successful understanding would depend a lot on the scholar’s ability to be or become a bordering, in-between figure, an “internal other” of this cultural locale, in order to interpret it not from inside the empire’s identity, nor from the Western Eurocentric outside, but rather from Russia’s internal otherness. This would allow working out additional angles and perspectives which often remain beyond the reach of any other position. This is not to claim a privileged epistemic position for the minorities and it does not mean that the intellectual establishment – Russian or European – should be deprived of the right to its own point of view. It means simply that all these positions are contextual and should not be regarded as absolute; each should be heard and included in the interactive dialogue.

To do that without going outside and beyond the limits of a privileged position of Eurocentric modernity in all its forms is hardly possible. The degree of internal others’ assimilation within Russia always

remains controlled by the dominant Slavic/Christian/Russian culture. The linguistic difference in all its superficiality in post-Soviet space is accompanied by insuperable cultural difference, working from the ultimately outcast position of an internal other. In Alberto Memmi's words, these doubly colonial others are "half-breeds of colonization, understanding everyone because they belonged completely to no one" (Memmi 1991: xvi). This position is typical not only for Memmi, but also for other border theorists from different parts of the world, in the sense of the bordering, negotiating, internally other stance itself. Certainly it has different specific features in different locales and within different historicities, while retaining its basic border character at the same time – as in the sensibilities of Gloria Anzaldúa or Homi Bhabha. Within the Soviet space a similar sensibility can be found in the position of a Kazakh writer, Olzhaz Suleymenov, who, like Anzaldúa, attempted to create a trans-disciplinary text between a scholarly work, an essay, fiction and a cultural manifesto. His well known book *As I Ia: The Book of a Well-Intentioned Reader*, 1975 was severely criticized by official mono-disciplinary and chauvinist Soviet scholarship.

Fiction, trans-disciplinary practices and the insights of intellectuals that dwell in both the languages of the European others and Europe's imperial languages, are crucial to counter the detached and imperial observers of the social sciences and the humanities – both in their European origins and in their "adaptation" outside Europe by local agents.

When we look at the design linking the Russian empire and its colonies there appear possible and often unexpected correlations with the works of Latin-American (E. Dussel), Franco-Maghrebian (A. Memmi), Caribbean (F. Fanon), and South Asian (D. Chakrabarty) thinkers. But the ex-socialist world is now in a void, as opposed to the ex-Third World that has become "fashionable".

Most Eurocentric theories of modernity are still built largely on a linear historical projection from the Roman Empire to the U.S., dismissing the cultures of other empires, even if they were technically in Europe (like the Habsburg Empire), in peripheral Europe (like Russia) and in the periphery of Europe (like the Ottoman empire). Even more importantly they interpreted the varied imperial histories of non-Western locales from the standpoint of Western Europe and the U.S. as the only universal reference point.

The so-called subaltern theorists are apparently reluctant to explore these remote locales, not only because of the lack of actual knowledge, but also because Eastern Europe and Russia are "others" to both worlds – the West and the radical non-West. So-called sovietologists and area specialists in Russia and Eastern Europe are still very much dependent on the political and ideological patterns that informed the origin of their disciplines. At the same time, even if they are acquainted with contemporary postmodern theories, they seldom care much about postcolonial or critical globalization discourses. Therefore, the studies of the imperial and colonial problematic



with respect to Russia, which are produced in the West, are often historically informative, yet they are written from the Eurocentric perspective that informs the social sciences and the humanities, and generally they lack a strong theoretical grounding. This is clear in such recent works as Dominic Lieven's comparative study of the Russian empire (Lieven 2000) and Lonnie R. Johnson's book on Central Europe (Johnson 2002).

In this article I would like to point out several aspects of modernity and imperial/colonial configurations in the territory to the East of the West, and do it through the lens of the borders (i.e. imperial and colonial differences) and from the perspective (cultural as well as epistemic) of a Russian empire's internal "other". "Russia", like any imperial configuration, is not homogeneous beyond the administrative registration of its citizen. And Russian citizenship, as many historical and contemporary examples demonstrate, unfortunately does not automatically provide either the inclusion into the sphere of "sameness", or the happy homogeneity of self-identification. Colonial differences remain sharp in contemporary Russia. But even in less radical situations it is impossible to assign one model of identification for the whole country and adjust the varied historical and cultural experiences of many groups living in Russia to this inevitably local model. Nor does the transition from Soviet empire to the thoughtlessly imported model of a nation-state – not adapted in our cultural locale – seem to be working.

Understanding borders from the borders themselves, which seems most appropriate in the case of the Russian empire, means methodological contextualization because our epistemic perspective is informed by our lived personal and collective experiences. From the perspective of the center, borders are interpreted as messy, transitory moments that need to be brought into the homogenizing designs of the empire. From the perspective of the borders, homogenization is experienced as an enactment of state violence to eradicate differences. Besides, looking at the borders from the border perspective necessarily means rejecting rigid disciplinary divisions and frames and taking instead a trans-disciplinary stance.

In recently published works devoted to the typology of empires, Russia/Soviet Union and post-Soviet space remain at the border, or, are as yet non-existent because they threaten to overturn any classification based on the logic of post-Enlightenment Western empires and their colonies. Russia continues to be the "dark other" of Western Europe, although understanding its imperial discourses, often copied from the West, can turn out to be interesting outside Russia and work for the re-conceptualization of the imperial-colonial difference in other cultural locales.

Thus, there are certain points of confluence with other empires – mainly, the so-called liminal Eurasian empires of Modernity: Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman empire – that shared with Russia not only belated modernization, but also political and economic doom in the presence of maritime and later capitalist empires of modernity: Spain and Great Britain.

But at the same time there always remains a great deal of insuperable differences and opacity in the Russian experience, its untranslatability into other imperial-colonial tongues, even those that are relatively close.

Diverse Russian imperial legacies include several dissimilar models, which can be regarded in relation to European imperial hierarchies. The canonical concept of “universal history” itself, as formulated by Hegel, Kant and Marx, could be re-framed in terms of borders and imperial and colonial differences. This was conceived as the history of the world, written from the epistemic perspective of European modernity (Christian and secular). It fashioned itself as such and built on the imperial difference with other rival empires and on the colonial difference with subjugated peoples. This European colonial model was replicated and transformed in subaltern empires, like Russia. They created various self-images for the rest of the world and for their own internal sameness and otherness, grounded in the double relation with Western capitalist empires and with its own colonies.

Russian border-ness and liminality is of a many-layered nature, connected with a variety of factors. The geo-historical-cultural positioning of Russia not only predetermined its border civilizational characteristics, but also made it participate in various power configurations. Russia’s role as an opaque “other” and distorted mirror of the “civilized world”, largely mythologized in the last three centuries, is based on obvious and well known elements like the difference between the Russian Orthodox church and Western Christianity, or the Cyrillic literacy and alphabet and the Latin tradition. Close and complex relations with Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman empire present a separate level of Russian imperial-colonial configuration. It is not by chance that the intersections of these three liminal continental empires have generated various myths and global metaphors of cultural imagery that can be regarded as reactions both negative and positive of the marginalized zones to the triumphal march of Western modernity. Such were the myths of Central Europe, the Balkan mythology, Slavo-centrism, Westernization and Eurasianism in Russian culture, etc.

Russian imperial tactics and discourses from the very beginning to the Soviet empire’s last days have been mixed and eclectic at best. Having chosen for itself the part of a paradigmatic borderland, Russia – at least in the last 300 years – has remained not non-Western enough, to use this non-Western-ness as a distinctive and stable criterion of Russia’s self identification. The non-Western element in Russian culture has never been sufficiently formulated in its own terms to be used as a basis for “authentic” Russian epistemic and cultural discourses.

Even if we take the famous examples of the so-called Russian religious philosophy of Berdjajev, Florensky or Leontjev, one easily sees that they are a peculiar combination of Christianity and pagan myths with some imported neo-platonic and Romantic ideas, presented within the frame of essentially Western cultural and epistemological reference points, even if some of these philosophers shaped their discourses as a denial of European legacy. What is at work here is a typical expression of Russia’s

schizophrenic split of exaggerated and mostly faked European-ness and aggressive nativism. This contradictory sentiment reminds one of the U.S. immigrant behavior in “melting pot” times, although in Russian imperial imaginary a more important part was played by religious, ethnic, ideological, military and geo-political factors, than by economic and commercial ones.

The Russian empire can be grouped also with non-Western modern empires such as Japan, which also generated a double or split identity: on the one hand, it always claims to be a subaltern empire with the West, while on the other hand, it implements its own colonial tactics. The difference here which further complicates the Russian case, is that Japan, in contrast with Russia, never had any claims at whiteness/European-ness. Russia’s extensive territorial expansion and chronic deterritorialization and lumpenization of the vast masses of people (Khoros 1996) led rather early to the erosion of traditional socio-economic and cultural patterns. This was in contrast to Japan which had a developed traditional pre-capitalist culture/ethics that allowed it to combine modernization with the preservation of an alternative to Western socio-cultural models, without turning modernization into Westernization. But the schizophrenic split remains intact in post-imperial Japan. Hanasaki Kohei compares the division of contemporary Japanese consciousness with the well known story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Kohei 2000: 71). In the Russian case this split is deeper and less conscious, and the decolonization of our own minds remains an important task for Russian intellectuals today.

It does not seem particularly fruitful to explain the failures of Russian modernization only by its insuperable traditionalism and archaic nature, as has been done by a number of scholars who build their models of history on the basis of the un-critically accepted eurocentric paradigm of linear progress and successive change of economic, political and social models (Akhiezer 1997; Yanov 1988). Russian culture can be described as eclectic, simultaneously combining various spatial-temporal cultural layers under a relative weakness and blurred-ness, if not hollowness, of the center. This enabled G. Pomerantz to compare Russian culture with an onion (Pomerantz 2001).

The same logic of simultaneity works in relation to the Russian models of colonization and expansion, that have successfully coexisted for a long time – from the colonization of Siberia, often compared with the Spanish expansion to the West, to the strong Orthodox Christian element shaping the imperial discourses of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and finally to the civilizing models of the latest and the least original colonization of the Caucasus and Central Asia, copying the British pattern.

The multiple marginality of the Russian empire becomes obvious when compared with other countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe that served as a buffer, dividing Russia from the “civilized world”, and often suffered from its expansionist appetites. Here, too, a typical way of identification prevailed, based on the split between the need for

modernization to secure a sense of belonging to the global movement of history and the remaining local sensibilities (national, regional, ethnic, religious, etc.). The provisional nature of the modern ethos and nation-state models becomes apparent when it is “applied” to Europe’s non-absolute others, such as most of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, as well as the large and blurred border zones of European Russia. The internal European otherness can be described diachronously as a complicated border zone of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious mixing, difficult to integrate within the homogeneous nation-states, invented in the core European countries during the second and secular modernity. The very cultural diversity of Central/Eastern Europe is, after all, a result of long and complex European and Eurasian imperial expansions and migrations. Thus, intellectuals coming from local histories that have been submerged for many years by the expansionist designs of various empires, are bound to become “topographers”, redrawing linguistic maps, literary geographies and cultural landscapes. In Deleuze’s definition (Deleuze 1993: 87) they are also archeologists, combining the cartographic urge for trajectories and bifurcations with a quest for a lost past and memory.

Equivocal Central European mythology has existed in aggressive form (German “Mitteleuropa”), in dissident nostalgic reminiscence of the Golden Age of Franz Joseph’s Central Europe (in Milan Kundera and slightly earlier, in Emil Choran) and in relatively tolerant forms of pan-European confederative projects, suggested e.g. by a Czech president, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, back in the early decades of the 20th century. His ideal of a multicultural commonwealth of small independent states between Germany and Russia was an attempt to carve a space for Central Europe in between the East and the West, the South and the North. This meaning of Central European mythology was revived at the crack of the Soviet Union’s collapse in fantastic and never to be fulfilled confederative plans for the new/renewed democracies of Central Europe. But such a nostalgic retrography, often presented as an alternative to globalization, is in fact nothing else than an expression of never overcome and even never realized imperial-colonial complex – in this case, nostalgic of Austria-Hungary. In the case of Austria-Hungary and Russia the urge to modernize and the resentment emanated from their peculiar inferiority complex. Ultimately, this came with their inability to fulfil their global imperial goals and to integrate into the macro-narrative of Western Europe. Consequently they were forced to be content with the role of non-absolute others.

Eastern European intellectuals and Russian adherents of Westernization, the “zapadniks”, vacillate between occidentalist and authenticity discourses, retaining their double alterity with respect to both Western Europe and their local cultures. They must preserve a predictable degree of otherness to remain interesting, but not dangerous, in Western eyes. At the same time, they claim to represent the West in their native countries.

To call such a configuration “multiculturalism” would simply mean to unwittingly import a Western term and concept and artificially to impose it on a different cultural locale together with the ideological and political connotations that it implies, e.g. those of the U.S. The ethnic-cultural-religious-linguistic mixture of Eastern Europe and Russia should rather be described as multiculturality (i.e. a condition of state, rather than a set of practices and theories) or, in some cases, trans-culturality. It is an objectively existing mixture of people (migrations), ethnicities, languages and religions that has taken place over the course of roughly the last millennium in the area. Its conceptualization in the form of multiculturalism, as a project combining theories, practices and even myths of diversity and difference, has not yet been sufficiently developed and shaped. If it happens, the imperial-colonial problematic is likely to take a central place in this model.

Many Eastern European countries went, often in a matter of decades, from small empires to the loss of independence and sometimes to total erasure from the map (Poland, Hungary) or went through a chronic changing of various imperial masters (Romania). The colonies of such short-lived proto-empires and the three modern liminal empires of Eurasia constituted the basis for Central/Eastern/South Eastern European multiculturality. It was expressed in different times in the topoi of 19<sup>th</sup> century Vienna and in an earlier Ottoman “Millet” system that allowed for successful regulation of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. In the U.S., instead, the waves of immigration and accompanying discourses of otherness can serve as clear marks to show the consecutive steps from one ideology to the next – from Manifest Destiny to the “melting pot” and “salad bowl” and to the various neo-liberal multicultural models of today – until very recently, based on a clearly defined WASP-ish norm. In Eastern Europe there has never been one sufficiently dominant monotopic epistemology, religion, language, ethnicity or race. The most important factor in grasping this peculiar positioning and type of multiculturality is its double liminality with respect to Western Christianity and Islam. This was more pronounced in the Russian case, as Central Europe, after all, was much closer to Western culture and even to Latin Christianity.

Eastern and South-Eastern Slavic and/or Orthodox Europe had no choice but to incline more towards Russia and to negotiate its multiple identity between the resistance to the Ottoman empire and the partial or complete negation of Russia. Ultimately this failed – as an Empire – to take the baton from the Byzantium and to create a Great Eastern Orthodox (Slavic) kingdom. Territorial expansion remained the basic pattern of Russian/Soviet colonization, characteristically marked by the tendency not to assimilate, but to drive away the different peoples and taking over their territories. It is not by chance, in this respect, that later efforts to incorporate European civilizational patterns into the Russian model of colonization in the Caucasus and Central Asia ultimately failed and were never accepted by its imperial ideologists.

Eastern European multiculturalism had a distinct taste of a mutual subaltern destiny of “second class Europeans” which worked in favor, rather than against, a balanced multicultural society. Subordinate imperial positions gave birth to trans-cultural models and strategies of survival that responded to the endemic ethnic-religious-linguistic mixtures of Eastern Europe. In this region, Christianity was entangled with Islam, Catholicism with Protestantism, Slavic cultures could be both of Latin and Cyrillic literacies and a Romance language could be connected with Christian Orthodoxy.

All this has little to do with North American multiculturalism, which is a set of theories and practices that, especially in the neo-liberal age, are often constructed then applied to the cultural reality. Eastern/Central European multiculturalism is a less controlled and more objective cultural condition of the locale worked by a long existing mixture of languages, ethnicities, religions and classes which cannot be described as a “melting pot”. The consequences of globalization and decolonization which shaped the development of multiculturalism in the U.S. worked differently here.

It is true, however, that from Western European and U.S. perspectives Eastern Europe itself after 1989 became yet another dangerous source of immigration, threatening the stability of the West/North. At the same time the double logic of Russian imperial/colonial configuration continued in the 1990s. Russia played the role of the un-wanted and threatening immigrant into the West, but at the same time guarded its own borders against the unwanted immigration from the ex-Soviet republics and ex-Third World.

The multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-linguistic Russian empire was similar to the Ottoman empire: it had a huge territory and relatively weak centralization; and it was in constant conflict with expansionist appetites. Russia had to satisfy them in accordance with the geopolitical power division of the 18<sup>th</sup> and especially the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – i.e. it had to expand mainly toward the East and the South, which ethnically and religiously were sharply different zones. This periodically generated in the Russian and later Soviet imperial ideologists a fear of a possible “yellowing” of the Russian empire. These arguments flourish today in the post-Soviet hysteria of “colonization of the Far East by China”, whipped up by both media and the official ideologies. Many people still remember the Soviet ideology of double standards – ethnic nationalism and chauvinism for Slavs (mainly Russians) and “proletarian internationalism” for everyone else. These discourses masked themselves under the cover of patriotism, which implied the second-class-ness of the rest of the ethnicities in the socialist world from the USSR’s internal non-Slavic republics to the Eastern European countries.

The important migration aspect of multi-culturality for both Russian and Soviet imaginary also had an interesting twist: in the Russian Empire there never was a strictly defined boundary between the metropolis

and the European colonies. Many territories such as the Ukraine had a bordering and uncertain status. Hence the migrations within Russia and the USSR were asymmetrical in the sense that the Slavs migrated in large numbers to the Russian equivalents of the Far West (mainly Siberia), to the future Ukraine, to the steppe regions of the Volga and the Ural mountains and later the Caucasus and Central Asia. The reverse migratory flow was never strong even in Soviet times and the situation started to seriously change only today when the post-Soviet space finally took an active part in the world migration flows in all directions.

The unique imperial configuration of Russia – a quasi-Western empire of subaltern type, a colony among the empires – has been expressed not only in the fact that in order to survive, it had to wear different masks for different partners. Also, inside Russia there was a complex internal hierarchy of inter-colonial differences and a variety of metropolitan masks for each of the colonies. When Russia was looking to its Western colonies (Finland, Poland, the Baltic states, Western Ukraine, etc.), it was acting as a not particularly confident colonizer with a strong inferiority complex, which did not allow the use of civilizing discourses. Looking to the East and to the South, Russia put on a different mask – that of a translator of civilization, a distorted version of the famous “White man’s burden”, which Fyodor Dostoyevsky described as: “In Europe we were hangers-on and slaves, whereas in Asia we shall go as masters” (Dostoyevsky 1977: 38). Thus, the subaltern imperial and colonial differences played simultaneously in this Janus-faced empire.

The third face of the Russian empire was expressed in its relation with Belarus and Ukraine, which were negated in Tzarist Russia as separate ethnicities and regarded simply as parts of one wholly homogenous Russia. This was in order to make the Slavic element stronger and more numerous in this very diverse empire, and thus to include the Eastern Slavic people into the sphere of the empire’s “sameness”. Otherness was the fate of the so-called “inorodtsy” of non-slavic origin – “those who were born others”.

In the Russian context border becomes a concept overloaded with meanings; it is a limit and a margin and an in-between-space, which has always been used in self-definitions of Russian culture and its never resolved East-West trauma. Today there are only sparse scholarly attempts to understand why the Russian border has developed differently – in epistemic terms – from other borders and why, today, when the world is celebrating the meaning-generating power of border cultures, Russian liminality is left in meaningless stagnation while it interprets its own border-ness in exclusively negative terms. This looks strange in view of the works of earlier Russian theorists, like Yuri Lotman, who paid specific attention to the translating mechanisms of the border. He called borders spaces of intense semiotization and metaphoric translation-transformation where new texts and meanings are frequently and profusely generated (Lotman 2000: 267). The answer to this lies, in my opinion, in the double imperial-colonial nature of Russian culture, that influenced the formation

and development of humanities and social sciences in our country. Both its main forms of Eurocentrism and the negative reaction to this in the form of nationalism are still formulated in the very system of concepts they sometimes deny; they are the direct results of Western discourses of modernity, positivist paradigms and normative scholarly myths. A possible way out of this could be the development of alternative trans-disciplinary critical discourses.

Another important shift would be the focus on the spheres that before were not considered serious enough to be used as relevant material for scholarly analysis – i.e. on literature, art, popular culture, the realm of the quotidian and the non-systemic elements of culture where the real generation of meanings takes place. In my view, the most creative and original conceptualizations of the imperial-colonial problematic in post-Soviet space are to be found particularly in these cultural spheres and, as yet, not in scholarly research.

In the reaction of Russian intellectuals to the complex imperial history of Russia/Soviet Union and post-Soviet space one can trace the inner conflicts connected with the specific positioning of Russian scholars in the context of the imperial and colonial differences of the subaltern empire. According to Lotman, in the history of Russian culture there were two basic stages when it was attuned to the reception of Western texts from outside. The first, he connects with Christianization; and the second, with the reforms of Peter the Great, when the new Russian culture was actively opposing itself to the old European one as a civilization that failed to fulfill its mission (Lotman 2002: 273).

In my view, today we can speak of the third period of the Russian culture's massive reception of Western influence, connected with cultural globalization. This process started in the declining days of the Soviet regime, when the inflow "belated" by several decades of cultural texts from outside, considerably increased. The negative reaction to them started a little later. This was in the mid-late 1990s, when in the minds of Russian intellectuals there took place a characteristic shift from idealizing the West and global cosmopolitan projects to the local nationalist sensibility in the vein of familiar ideology of the "besieged fortress".

Many scholars in Russia continue to act within this second paradigm of Peter the Great of the production of knowledge and the relation with the European legacy. This was based on the reluctance to question the European cultural project, as the only reference point, and at the same time it was based on the prevailing Russian efforts to demonstrate their own intellectual and spiritual superiority to the West and even aspire to a more profound understanding of the European legacy than Europe itself. There is an urgent need to conceptualize this third wave of Western cultural expansion in Russia, but such efforts remain at best sporadic and marginal in Russian humanities and social sciences.

Aspiring to the position of Europe's "internally assimilated others", Russian intellectuals make themselves rather vulnerable because, in



Western eyes, Russia has always remained a barbarian/Asiatic empire. The condescending attitude of Russian intellectual elites toward the Third World and, consequently, their own lack of interest in de-colonization, intensified Russian intellectual isolationism, and it brought forward peculiar half-realized jealousies and complexes. In the most extreme cases strong antagonism toward the Third World was expressed – toward non-whites and non-Christians – in an effort to compensate by a sort of secondary Europeanization.

After the monody of Marxist interpretations, Russia seemingly experienced a renaissance of various cultural theories, all of them connected in one way or another with border/liminality as a topic. However, most of them have remained within the Eurocentric frame of mind even when they tried to re-think Western postmodernism in the Russian epistemic environment. They also remained blind to the connection of border problematics and imperial/colonial differences. This can explain the fate of the humanities in multiple marginalized cultures in a major collapse of cultural reproduction and complete rejection of previous epistemic models, as it happened in Russia. A large part of border studies in Russia are based on the peculiar cult of synthesis and systematicity. This is connected with the progressive view of history, as a panacea for all border cultures which must attain a certain synthetic stage before they can successfully expand and behave aggressively toward dominant cultures and create a field of constant meaning-formation (Zemskov 1999).

In view of the general “borderization of the world” that balances – and in some cases overweighs – the unifying tendencies of globalization, it would be more relevant instead to look for the impossibility and undesirability of complete synthesis and assimilation. This was done by both Western postmodernists and their non-Western equivalents. But Russian humanities seldom regard synthesis in Derridean terms, as “reaching full equivalence and therefore closure” (Derrida 1981: 212–13). They remain blind to the nuances of power, which without synthesizing or contrasting the cultures, can provide the necessary meaning-generating lacunas in signification. For Russian humanities within the epistemic frames of Western modernity, the Hegelian idea of synthesis remains the main way of understanding the border. Seldom do these theorists take into account the opposite tendencies of growing non-systemic and non-synthetic elements in world culture, which brings forward hybrid marginal configurations, actively discussed and implemented today in many parts of the world.

Generalized and objectified synthesis discourses put Russian scholars into the epistemologically helpless state of imprisonment in their own secondary Eurocentrism. This prevents them from dialoging with the well known world theorists of the border – Gloria Anzaldúa, Albert Memmi, Franz Fanon and many others. In other words, it prevents them from decolonizing their own thinking and the Russian humanities and social sciences by moving toward the epistemology of the border, in which the

border is not subsumed under a territorial epistemic model, whether of the social sciences, humanities, or Western philosophy. Instead it is strengthened by the trans-disciplinary perspective offered by the border cultures themselves.

Contemporary concepts of mediation in cultural dynamics and translation as mediation and bridging, to say nothing of theories of hybridity and negotiation, do not translate into Russian scholarly discourses. Operating with deceptively universal concepts, Russian humanities often imbue them with a completely different meaning than do cultural theorists in the rest of the world. Binarity for them becomes a specifically Russian feature of identification in contrast with mediation, which is interpreted as a purely Western mechanism and is opposed to the "third way". The "third time-space" itself, which is everywhere regarded as a rejection of a homogenized imaginary and as created by the builders of an empire and nation-state. However, in Russian theories it turns into a reactionary "third way", connected with the model of "Moscow as the third Rome". This is not a mediating figure, but rather the affirmation of a messianic historical identity.

It becomes necessary to work out a specific discourse for the interpretation of the changing realities of the borders, colonial and imperial differences and trans-linguistic and trans-cultural phenomena. They are still largely interpreted in exclusively negative terms, while the formation of a positive collective identity is based – even today – on imperial complexes of mixed Russian and Soviet (Slavic) nature.

Postcolonial and post-imperial artistic sensibilities that have been emerging in the former Soviet Union in the spheres of arts, fiction, popular culture, media and daily life are seldom interpreted within this particular realm. Writers working with the problematic of colonial and imperial differentials often fall victims to the dominant Western aesthetic traditions – even in their adapted Russian forms. The assimilationist paradigm in such cases goes hand in hand with the Russian language and the canonized "realist" literary tradition. But for the younger generation of post-Soviet writers, to be called postmodern is, of course, more prestigious than to be seen as a realist in the vein of Tolstoy or to practice any alternative aesthetic models. Yet in the works of certain post-Soviet writers there emerges a sensitivity toward the imperial/colonial element of Russian history and contemporaneity. These authors usually do not belong to the "mainstream". In their works, based on the multiple consciousness and subjectivity of the border, one can witness a constant crossing of the regional and the imperial, the national and the local, and finally, the linguistic borders. For we cannot forget the change of the hegemonic power of the Russian language in relation to variegated subaltern languages.

Certainly the Russian language can be described as a colonizer's tongue on a much smaller scale than English, Spanish and French. At the same time the logic remains similar. In the post-Soviet regions the attitude towards Russian as the colonizer's tongue has not yet been changed into

detached, objectified, and playfully creative, as it happened to English in India, for example. The activities of Russian linguists to launch all sorts of campaigns in order to promote the preservation of linguistic or, at least, alphabetic dominance is in a sense a clear sign of (neo)imperial scholarly ideology. And for newly independent states the choice of alphabet itself becomes a step of cultural and civilizational choice. But in post-Soviet fiction there are almost no attempts at profound linguistic and epistemic hybridity of the type that a Chicana writer, Gloria Anzaldúa, practices in her philosophy and aesthetics – or that can be found in the linguistic and epistemic creolization of the Caribbean. The oral and especially the everyday popular post-Soviet culture is certainly more flexible and readier to create linguistic-cultural hybrids than literature and the humanities. This refers to Ukrainian “surzhik”, to the acquired pronounced phatic function of Russian language in Uzbekistan and to several other interesting phenomena.

But the lack of a post-Soviet Gloria Anzaldúa is not accidental. It is the influence of the Soviet empire at work, that shaped the stereotype of “national in its form and Soviet in its content” which is difficult to overcome. This was in a sense our variant of post-colonial paradox. Without being racist these authors were Eurocentric, because they were brought up on the Russian and Western-European traditions. The canon of Russian literature of the 19th century was itself a variant of the Western one. Hence the ethnic-cultural elements became mere decorations or “local color” that could spice a work of fiction written by an ethnically non-Russian writer with a necessary and predictable “exotic” element.

Successfully homogenizing and assimilating cultures in the name of creating a new Soviet identity, the Soviet modernization project, continues to define the standpoint of many post-Soviet writers, for whom the Western modernization vector remains the only option. And here lies their main difference from Anzaldúa and other border writers. This is probably why the writers who invoke the colonial/imperial difference in their works are more likely to make an inter-textual link with Rudyard Kipling than with Salman Rushdie, even if they belong to the colonized side of the border.

It would be wrong simply to borrow the term “postcolonial discourse” and automatically apply it to post-Soviet space, as this term was formulated for another cultural locale, and its universality is questionable at best. An attempt to use the fashionable epistemic cliché of postcoloniality in analyzing the post-soviet was done in David Chioni Moore’s recent article published in PMLA, where the author applies the umbrella term “postcolonial” to such essentially different locales and histories as Algeria and Ukraine, Philippines and Hungary (Moore 2001). In my view it is necessary to work out a more complex and differentiated approach for the interpretation of the realities of the ex-Eastern block, which would take into account colonial and imperial differences, specific experience of intersections of minor liminal empires, peculiar modernization paths, unique understanding of ethnicity, nation, religion, multiculturalism, etc.

Then we can speak of the post-Soviet case as of trans-imperial, trans-cultural, trans-national, and not simply post-colonial, due to the specific Russian/Soviet imperial/colonial configuration. This is marked with a less strict and less defined division into the center and the peripheries, a more chaotic ethnic and cultural mixing, in which the race stratification was never as important as in Western empires. The terms trans-cultural and trans-national discourses would probably be more adequate and built-in to describe the Russian/Soviet empire and its aftermath. However it is difficult for intellectuals and artists alike to maintain this “trans-” position because it requires from us an epistemic effort. It is still very difficult to reject the territorial thinking and binarity of Western epistemology and aesthetics, and to accept instead a border position, in which various trans-imperial traditions intersect and clash and a complex trans-cultural site is born.

Mediating re-thinking of a unique Russian imperial/colonial model's elements, outside the strictly Eurocentric interpretations, would allow imagining it not only as a wonderful nostalgic ideal of “what we lost”, but also seeing the imperial relations through the prism of imperial difference. Maybe then in the images of the multi-faced Russian empire we will be able to see not only the two-dimensional stereotypes of the “prison of nations” or a “multicultural paradise”, not only national genealogy or a happy and superficial co-existence of ethnicities. The social sciences and the humanities in our country would have to redefine themselves no longer as an “adaptation” of Western (post)modernism, based on a passive conservation of knowledge and its constant simplification and unification, but as a serious effort at mediation and translation, leading to a fruitful generation of meanings.

It is a great comfort to know that a number of post-Soviet scholars have already started to tackle this problem. Among them I would mention sociologist Boris Dubin, who insists that no new visions are likely to emerge in Russia if national/nationalistic and imperial models and psychological complexes are not critically challenged and discarded. Dubin diagnoses Russian humanities as suffering from a “sclerosis of inter-group communications and mechanisms of translation and circulation of intellectual impulses, that cause depression, catastrophism and imperial tendencies” (Dubin 2001: 179). In such conditions it becomes hard to practice border thinking, which, crossing the imperial and colonial differences in disciplinary, ethnic-cultural, religious and linguistic senses, would be able to generate the lacking dynamic, the ability for self-reflection, a de-familiarization with the norms which are naturalized in our consciousness, and questioning generally accepted ways of thinking and knowledge production.

“Trans-imperial” and “trans-colonial” relations, as I defined and described them throughout this article, can become the ground for a mutually productive dialogue between the Russian humanities and postcolonial theorists and scholars of cultural globalization. Russia remains

even today a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country in which the internal problems of interpreting ethnic, religious and linguistic otherness, as well as the multiplicity of existing models of relations with internal colonies, have not yet been properly addressed. The formation of a new alternative epistemic position, taking into account the above described ambivalent role of Russia in modernity, can lie in the direction of developing the “trans-” perspectives within scholarly thinking and cultural imagery. E. Dussel’s conceptualizing of planetary modernity, that I quoted in the beginning, is precisely the realization of such perspective. The establishment of connections between Russian humanities and social sciences and border theorists in various parts of the world, facing a similar need to re-think the project of modernity, Eurocentrism, imperial/colonial differences—should be based on egalitarian dialogue. It seems that the most promising way for the development of the world intellectual production in the future will be at once in critiquing Euro-American epistemology in the social sciences and the humanities and generating knowledge from the very creativity we find today around the world in the actors at the borders.

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### CHAPTER XIII

## “ORIENTALIZATION” OF MARXISM IN REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

YURIY POCHTA

Under the conditions of the present vast social renewal of Russia, it is interesting to address the experience of the previous epoch-making stage of her history and to look at how, in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russian Marxists treated the role of Russia in world history and defined its place between West and East. Here, the latter is understood, first of all, as the Muslim East, as during many centuries contacts both with the foreign Muslim societies and with her own Muslim population in many respects determined the destiny of Russia. The dramatic experience of the Soviet history may allow us to draw some lessons for the present stage of the endless search by Russia for its place in the world.

One of the “eternal” problems of public thought in Russia is the definition of Russia’s destiny in world history. The need to find the role and place of Russia in the interrelations and interactions of West and East sets the complexity of this determination. Philosophical-historical analysis is the appropriate level of research in which society determines the course and direction of world history—Western or Eastern. This is with the participation of Russia or her opposition, and whether Russia can lead humankind. The polemics and debates on these questions in many respects determined the development of Russian historiography, Marxist history of philosophy, Eurasianism and non-Eurasianism. They determined also the limits between various social movements – from the “Westerners” and “Slavophiles” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century down to the present “Democrats” and “National Patriots”<sup>1</sup>. This problematic attracts special interest during periods of revolutionary upheavals and shocks to Russian society, when an exit from the former unsatisfactory situation is seen by the radical political forces as the choice of a new direction of development for Russia limited to three variants: “Western”, “Eurasian” and “Original”.

It would be desirable to hope that the dramatic experience of Soviet history will allow us to draw some lessons for the present stage of the endless search by Russia of her place in the world. Nevertheless, the history of Russia did not begin yesterday, and it is necessary to understand, as G. Fedotov underscored, that behind us is not the history of the city of Glupov,

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<sup>1</sup> Yuriy Pochta, “The Ideas of postsoviet Russia about Europe”, *Ideias de Europa: Que Fronteiras? Estudos Sobre a Europa* (Coimbra: Quarteto Editora, 2004), pp. 267-282.

but the tragic history of a great country – degenerated and mutilated, but nevertheless a great history.”<sup>2</sup>

Marxism was created for the radical transformation of bourgeois society – the highest achievement of the European Christian civilization which has spread its influence on all mankind. Therefore it is quite clear that to prepare themselves for the world socialist revolution, for almost two decades Russian Marxists studied the Western capitalist economy, the tendencies in the development of bourgeois relations in Russia, and were scantily interested in the East in general and in the Muslim East in particular. V.I. Lenin addressed the problems of the East mainly in the context of the national-colonial question. On a worldwide scale his main attention was focused on the West, instead of the East. As regards the Russian empire his main interest lay in the European, rather than Asian part of the country.

When we reconstruct V.I. Lenin’s philosophical-historical notions about the East, we may see that he divided its history into two qualitatively different stages: “pre-historical” and “historical”:

1. Before the first Russian Revolution (1905-1907) at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to him, the East (Asia), where the majority of humankind lived, was “wild”, “forgotten”, “feral”, “dead”, being in a “medieval dream”, in “historical inactivity” and “truly outside the historical progress” which has been so characteristic of European society.

2. After 1905, V.I. Lenin believes, under the influence of world capitalism and the Russian revolution, the East awoke to life, and finally rose on the “path of the West” to become involved in the struggle for European ideals, in the whirlpool of world capitalist civilization. Moreover, in 1908 V.I. Lenin asserted that the proletariat of India had already grown up to a conscious mass political struggle. He assured himself and colleagues that in the Ottoman Empire the proletarian struggle was already underway. Besides it appears that hundreds of millions of proletarians in Asia were already battle-hardened and their number grows not by the day, but by the hour, thereby multiplying the number of the “Asian comrades of the conscious European worker.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in V.I. Lenin’s vision and conception we see that within three years a wonderful transformation of the “feral” population of the East into a proletariat capable of waging conscious political struggle together with the European proletariat. What had happened was a transition by V.I. Lenin from his rather realistic earlier position that the socialist revolution was the task of the Western, and as a last resort of the Russian, proletariat to

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<sup>2</sup> Georgiy P. Fedotov, *Sudba i grekhi Rossii* (The Destiny and Sins of Russia). V.1. (Saint-Petersburg: Sophia, 1992), p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> See: Vladimir I. Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy* (Complete Works), 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Moscow, V.17), pp. 179, 223; (Moscow, V. 21), pp. 401, 402; (Moscow, V. 23), p. 146; (Moscow, V. 39), p. 328; (Moscow,V.45), p. 30. (in Russian).



a pragmatic and mythological position. After the defeat of the Revolution of 1905-1907 in Russia, he wanted to believe that, at least in the East, the struggle against world capital continued. In other words, there was a temporary reorientation of his revolutionary hopes: from Russia (which in its development of capitalism he compared to the West) to the East. His shift towards the East from his usual pro-Western orientation took place a second time in 1920, when he lost hope of an immediate revolution by the European proletariat. In both cases, we notice, instead of an analysis of the objective preconditions for a socialist revolution, feverish attempts for a search for any ally, even from the East, for the Russian Marxists in their struggle against Western imperialism.

Probably, the real reason specific to a Marxist for oscillating between scientific analysis and myth-creation in explaining the history of the Eastern society lies in the problems of methodology of historical knowledge. Having assimilated from the heritage of European philosophy of history the principle of Eurocentrism in the explanation of world history, Marxists tried to disassociate themselves from what is central to that heritage, namely, the concept of civilization, and to replace it with the theory of socio-economic formations. However, Marx created the formation theory of historical process on the basis of an analysis of the European society in the capitalist epoch. It investigated the pre-capitalist stage only in its most general features. This also fully applies to the Islamic problematic: the founders of Marxism have not left any methodological concept of the middle level that could explain the emergence of Islam and Muslim society. They have failed to solve the dilemma: whether 1) the Muslim East, as Hegel and many other European thinkers argued, belongs to the Asian type of social development characterized by stagnation, absence of progress or history as such.<sup>4</sup>; 2) or it is related to social development, so that the theory of formations is applicable to its analysis.<sup>5</sup>

It seemed that the ambiguity of the methodological heritage of the founders of Marxism should have called for discussions among Russian Marxists. But serious disputes on the questions of the philosophy of history in this period did not occur. So, V.I. Lenin did not take into account the profound remarks by G. V. Plekhanov and Y. O. Markov, objecting to the plan for the immediate realization of a socialist revolution in Russia, their deep scholarly understanding of the impossibility of implanting the

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<sup>4</sup> See in more detail about the place of the Muslim East in the European philosophy of history: Yuriy M. Pochta, *Vozniknovenie Islama i musulmanskogo obchestva: filosofsko-metodologicheskii analiz* (The Origin of Islam and Muslim Society: Philosophical and methodological Analysis) (Moscow: Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, 1993). (in Russian)

<sup>5</sup> See in more detail about the conceptions of Marx and Engels on this question: Yuriy M. Pochta, "Musulmanskoe obchestvo kak problema marksistkoi filosofii istorii" (Muslim Society as a Problem of Marxist Philosophy of History), *East* (Moscow, №3, 1995), pp. 73-82. (in Russian)

European ideal into the Asian ground, and the attribution of Russia to the European type of social development. As a result, the development of the history of society from primitive to communist, created on the basis of the European historical material, was perceived by the Bolsheviks as universal and quite applicable both to the history of Russia and to that of Muslim society.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the underestimation of the East was explained by the doctrinaire conviction of the Russian Marxists that the destiny of humankind is decided in the bourgeoisie West, rather than in the stagnant East as a reserve of imperialism. At first they hoped for a victory of the Socialist revolution in the Western advanced capitalist countries. Then they came to the conclusion that Russia, having begun first, would give an impetus to a worldwide proletarian revolution mainly in the West. Only then would countries of the East, being colonial and semi-colonial periphery to the imperialist system, receive genuine liberation, and, with the help of the victorious proletariat of the most advanced countries, join the global federation of Soviet republics, and build socialism.

After unexpectedly failing to receive any revolutionary support from the West – and, contrary to all the principles of Marxism as a Western social doctrine – after seizing power, the Bolsheviks were compelled to look for new ideological methods to influence their new ally – the population of the pre-capitalist East. As Marxist ideology appealed to an insignificant part of the population, dubbed the “Muslim proletariat”, it was necessary to strike a compromise and, proclaiming their adherence to the principles of democracy, the Bolsheviks turned simultaneously to the anti-imperialist potential of both the national and the Islamic ideologies. So, in the appeal by V.I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin, “To all the Working Muslims of Russia and the East” (November, 1917), the revolutionary government of Russia, called Muslims their comrades and brothers, appealed for their sympathy and support, and proposed that they jointly struggle for liberation from enslavement by the imperialist predators. This appeal for a joint struggle was accompanied by a promise of the Soviet government to respect the beliefs and customs of the Muslims. It is possible to characterize this fact as one of the methods of forging a temporary union of the Bolsheviks with the Muslims, which was doomed, in the long run, to failure.

What was done on this path of creating such a necessary, but rather fragile alliance of no more than 10 years of Marxists and Muslims?

The definition of the term “Islamic” was applied very widely. First of all, it meant some sort of a national community of Soviet Russia, i.e. the Muslim populations of Soviet Russia. Thus, in the official paper of the Peoples’ Commissariat on Nationalities it was affirmed in 1919 that, in terms of the population of the country, Muslims were second only to Russians. Belief in the anti-imperialistic potential of Islam on a world scale

promoted the notion of the existence of a Muslim nation.<sup>6</sup> In those days one could also find in the press the term “Muslim language”, which evidently meant the Turkic languages of the peoples of the Russian empire – primarily the Tatar language, which was written in Arabic.

In this period there arose new forms of combining and connecting the ideas of proletarian internationalism, national community, and religious identity – forms that were completely improbable from the viewpoint of orthodox Marxism. So, Islam was widely conceived as a means of involving, in the revolutionary process and the construction of a communist society, the population of the various Islamic regions: in the Commissariat of Nationalities; in the military; in foreign affairs where Muslim departments were created. Even in the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) a Muslim section was created. In November 1919 V.I. Lenin addressed an All-Russia Congress of Muslim Communists!

Not having any basic character, all these measures were only spontaneous and more often were a belated reaction to the events of the Revolution and the civil war. They were also a method of mitigating the acuteness of the national question on the Eastern outskirts of Soviet Russia. For at least two years, the Bolsheviks were late in formulating their own solution to the national question for the Muslim peoples of Russia – especially the Tatar and Bashkir peoples. In March 1919, and in May 1920, in reaction to the demands of these two peoples, the Bolsheviks accordingly created the Bashkir and Tatar Republics. In 1918, K. Troyanovsky wrote with enthusiasm about these processes, asserting, “Crimean, Volga and Ural Tatars have taken advantage of the October Revolution quite legally and have announced their independent Tatar-Bashkir Republic”. However, the achievement of national statehood by the Muslim peoples of Russia was not – for the Central Government of Soviet Russia – an end by itself; rather it was to serve the goal of liberating the East, and become a means of influencing all Muslims throughout the world. Its goal was, as the same Marxist publicist figuratively expressed it, “to flood... them, having drowned them in the sea of the progressive and democratic Pan-Islamic movement, evolved from religion, but attaining its peak level in the state-political idea of the federation of all-Muslim peoples”. In turn, this federation should serve as a platform for the creation of a “United Front of the Democratic East”, and at the end the creation of an Eastern Anti-Imperialist Front”, some kind of an “International of the East”, withstanding and opposing the “Western International Capital”.<sup>7</sup> In the

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<sup>6</sup> On the idea that all Muslims of the world on the basis of pan-Islamism constitute a single nation, See: Konstantin Troyanovsky, *Vostok i Revolutsia. Popytka postroenia novoi politicheskoi programmy dlya tuzemnikh stran Vostoka-Indii, Persii i Kitaya* (East and the Revolution. An Attempt in Creating a New Political Program for the Native Countries – India, Persia and China) (Moscow, 1918), pp. 42-45.

<sup>7</sup> Troyanovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-45.

general context of persecutions on religion, which began in Soviet Russia from 1919, Islam, being considered a religion that suffered more during the Tsarist era, and with its own way of life, was for a time tolerated more than was the Russian Orthodox Church. The latter was invariably identified with the hated autocracy – the bulwark and founder of the “prison of the peoples” – the Empire.

More than that, aside from the international and atheistic spirit of Bolshevik Orthodoxy, the phenomenon, which Lenin named as the “Great Russian Dark Chauvinism”, represented by far a much more dangerous opponent of the Revolution than Islam and national movements of the Muslim peoples of Soviet Russia. In this period the official communist ideology in many respects identified the pre-Revolutionary struggle of Russian Marxists against autocracy and the struggle of national minorities against Russian colonization. Even Pan-Islamism was then treated as a revolutionary movement directed against Imperialism and Tsarism. Therefore, in relation to the Muslim clergy, to Islamic institutes, traditions, and rituals (holidays, etc.) the policy of the Soviet regime was inconsistent and contradictory – the aspiration for their complete obliteration was replaced by temporary sanctions, flirtations, and then by new interdictions.

But, already at the end of the 1920s, as the construction of socialism in one country began, all indulgences towards Islam were terminated and, simultaneously, the party was cleansed of the Muslim-believers.<sup>8</sup> As early as 1919 F. Dzerzhinsky proposed creating an Eastern section within the forerunner of the KGB (The All-Russia extreme commission) dedicated to the struggle against the “counterrevolutionary movements among the Muslims” of Soviet Russia. Such section was created at the beginning of the 1920s, as the problems of the Soviet East multiplied.

With the strengthening of Soviet power, the official Marxist ideology, pretending to monopolize the spiritual life of the society, aspired to supersede and replace all other forms of spirituality. Ethno-national ideas and religions, including Islam, were pronounced reactionary ideologies of the exploiter classes. There was an official declaration on the “need firmly – in the Bolshevik way – to attack the possibility of a peaceful transition of Eastern feudalism to socialism”.<sup>9</sup> It was officially recognized that in the course of its entire history, even the time of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam remained an ideological instrument for the exploitation of the working people.

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<sup>8</sup> See: A. Vishnevsky, “Kak eto delalos v srednei azii” (How It Was Done In Central Asia), *Science and Religion* (Moscow, 1990, N 2). (in Russian)

<sup>9</sup> A. Mamet, “Otrazenie marksizma v burzuznom orientalizme: V. Gurko-Kriazin i vostok” (Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Orientalism: V. Gurko-Kriazin and the East), *Istoriik-Marksist (The Historian-Marxist)* (Moscow, №17, 1930), p. 85. (in Russian)

So, for the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the attitude of Russian Marxists to the Muslim community of Russia evolved from 1) ignoring and underestimating, through 2) declaring , common interests in the struggle against all forms of exploitation and oppression, guaranteeing the principles of national self-determination and rights of conscience, to 3) violent social transformations of the traditional way of life and the eventual declaration of war on Islam. This evolution was stipulated – among other things – by the fact that the time of the world proletarian revolution was not approaching, and hence the problem of building socialism in one country presented a formidable challenge to Soviet Russia (USSR).

A different policy was conducted in the international arena, where Soviet Russia, continuing to search for any allies in its anti-Western and anti-imperialist struggle, encouraged and supported both national-religious and communist movements in countries of the Muslim East. That foreign policy simultaneously took up two problems: maintenance of the USSR state interests with its policy of peaceful coexistence, and the realization of the doctrine of world revolution – with the maintenance of state interests being subordinated to the world revolution, at least in its early period.

Political situations might change, but in terms of their doctrine, the Soviet Marxists, certainly, were never in doubt that all – Russian, Eastern, Western civilizations with their cultures and religions – should be sacrificed in the name of Marxism as the doctrine about the end of the old world.

After the October Revolution among the Bolsheviks, there gradually spread a sober understanding that hopes for immediate support from the West (in the form of revolutions) for the socialist revolution in Russia were unrealistic. In this connection, since 1918, the idea of a key role for the East in world revolution began taking hold. At that, the revolutionary character of the East was immensely exaggerated – it even acquired grotesque forms. By the end of 1918 and through all of 1919, there was a period of even increasing interest of Soviet Russia in Eastern societies, a time of intense expectation for revolutions in the East. At the end of 1918, there was even an organization “Union for the Liberation of the East”. Among its well known members were A. V. Lunacharsky, V. Gurko-Kriyazhin, K. Troyanovsky, etc. This activity, as narrated later by V. Gurko-Kriyazhin: “took place in a pioneering atmosphere, neophyte enthusiasm, revolutionary pathos and noble eastern romanticism”.<sup>10</sup> At the level of common sense the situation was more than clear – the Bolsheviks were in dire need of any possible, even Asian, allies. “The salvation of Soviet power – declared D. Rizanov at the VIII Congress of the Communist party – consists in inciting the maximum number of oppressed nations against the imperialist wolves”.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Vladimir A. Gurko-Kryazhin, “10 let vostokovednoi misli” (10 Years of Orientalist Thought), *New East* (Moscow, № 19, 1927), p. XLI. (in Russian)

<sup>11</sup> *Zizn natsionalnostei* (Life of Nationalities), 1919, March 30.

In terms of implementing these ideas, the most disputable steps were proposed, such as making use of the revolutionary potential of Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism, Islamic modernism – indeed, of Islam as a political, rather than a religious, doctrine – for the sake of creating the “Eastern International”.<sup>12</sup> There were also more radical proposals such as transferring the centre of gravity of the revolutionary wars from the European to the Asian theatres of world politics, and to turn India into the graveyard of English Imperialism.<sup>13</sup> In 1919 after the downfall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic Leo Trotsky came to the conclusion that the road to Paris and London was through India and Afghanistan. Therefore, he considered it necessary to direct urgently from the Urals to the East, an army well armed with machine guns. Besides that, he proposed creating a revolutionary academy, a political and military headquarters for the Asian revolution.<sup>14</sup>

In any case, the idea of a military-political way of “revolutionizing of the East” became urgent, and on the basis of the proposal by the Tatar communist, M. Sultan-Galiev, the idea was incorporated into the resolution on the Eastern question passed by the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East.

M. Sultan-Galiev repeatedly warned the leadership of the party, which unsuccessfully expected support from the Western proletariat, about the unacceptability of ignoring the serious role of the East in the cause of world revolution.<sup>15</sup> Some publicists went even further and underscored the anti-European character of the Russian Marxist social experiment, and about its impending success first of all in the colonial East.

A dazzling light from the East has rushed onto Europe – wrote one of them. All that is predatory and used to its gloom, hurries under the cover of dark reaction to extinguish this light. But the world predators will not succeed in their dark cause, if Soviet Russia will understand that their genuine allies and comrades are not in the West, but in the East... The history of our

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<sup>12</sup> Konstantin Troyanovsky, *op. cit.*; Vladimir A. Gurko-Kriyazhin. *Sumerki vostoka* (Twilight of the East) (Moscow, 1919).

<sup>13</sup> Lew D. Trotsky, “Memorandum Lwa Trotskogo” (The Memorandum of Leo Trotsky), *Rodina* (Moscow, 1990, № 10), pp. 12-13; Efendiev, “Problema Vostoka” (The Problem of the East), *Zizn natsionalnostei* (Life of Nationalities) (Moscow, 1919, № 41). (in Russian)

<sup>14</sup> K. K. Shirinya, “Trotskiy i Komintern” (Trotsky and the Comintern), *Novaya i Noveishaya Istoria* (Moscow, №1, 1991), pp. 4-5. (in Russian)

<sup>15</sup> Mirsait Sultan-Galiev, “Socialnaya revolyutsia i vostok” (Social Revolution and the East), *Zizn natsionalnostei* (Life of Nationalities) (Moscow, 1919, № 38), pp. 36-37. (in Russian)

Revolution, the genuine and truthful history, will be written in Eastern languages".<sup>16</sup>

One more publicist called urgently upon the anti-Europeanism [read as: "anti-colonialism"] of the Muslim East. He characterized Pan-Islamism as a religious-national movement in the Muslim countries that was directed against the domination of European capital. Although it contained elements of fanaticism and was a perverted form of the anger of the suppressed Muslim peoples wishing to save their backward modes of production, in effect, it was a revolutionary movement that had an anti-European character.<sup>17</sup>

The radical assumption – owing to the situation – that the initiative in the realization of the world socialist revolution could pass into the hands of the working peoples and communists of the East was not excluded. Anyway, to many Bolsheviks it became more and more obvious that without paying serious attention both to "one's own" and to the "other" peoples of the East, the Russian revolution was doomed to failure. In fact, this meant strengthening the non-European, Eastern, peripheral character of Russian Marxism in its practical embodiment and implementation.

In 1920 even such a consistent "Westerner" as V.I. Lenin, also came to the idea that the key to world revolution lay no more in the West, than in the East. Therefore, Soviet Russia should lead the world's anti-imperialist movement of peoples in the colonial and dependent countries. In the theses to the second Congress of the Communist International (Commintern), he wrote that world imperialism would fall down if the revolutionary pressure of the Western proletariat was combined with the revolutionary pressure of 70 percent of the world population which lived in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and, who, until then, were regarded as outside world history, and were considered only objects of history.

Under the decision of the same Commintern, in the autumn of 1920, the first Congress of the Peoples of the East was convened in Baku. It was a manifestation of the sharp turn in the orientation of the international communist organization from West to East. From a sympathetic attitude to the national-liberation struggle of the peoples of the East, the Commintern abandoned the position of initiator and leader. It, relied on the premise that the revolutionary liberation of the colonial world could occur prior to the European proletarian revolution. The Commintern appealed to the peoples of the East to help the "Great Russian Proletarian Revolution" to overthrow the imperialist governments of Europe. In order to win a new ally, the

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<sup>16</sup> *Zizn natsionalnostei* (Life of Nationalities) (Moscow, 1919, № 39). (in Russian)

<sup>17</sup> Efendiev, "*Deistvovat ot delno, no bit vmeste*" (Act Separately, but Together Beat), *Zizn natsionalnostei* (Life of Nationalities) (Moscow, № 26). (in Russian)

organizers of the Congress did not stop even at revising the slogan of proletarian internationalism; it rendered it as follows: “Proletariat of All Countries and Oppressed Peoples of the World—Unite!” Many Moscow representatives addressed the Congress as creators of a new myth about the revolutionary East. For example, Karl Radek asserted that a liberated East – not a new barbarism – but a new high culture, which had nothing to do at all with religion, would come to the rotten bourgeoisie of Europe. G. Zinoviev called on the participants of the Congress to organize the “sacred war” of the peoples of the East against imperialism. For this purpose, the “Council for the Propaganda and Action of the Peoples of the East” was formed under the auspices of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

However, the sacred war of the peoples of the East against imperialism, and the support for Soviet Russia did not materialize. “The Council for Propaganda and Action”, which was organized for that purpose, existed for no longer than a year. The Bolsheviks then had the task of building socialism in a separate country, whose civilizational specificity they never tried to understand – and, which they consequently simply ignored.

The impression that Leninism is a specifically Russian variant of Marxism is widespread. It is necessary to note this with respect to Lenin being a staunch supporter of the Western way of transforming the Russian Revolution into world revolution. Nevertheless, he could be found inclining periodically to the Eastern variant, which had in its bosom certain elements of anti-Europeanism; and, during periods of acute despair, falling back to the notion of a “backward Europe and an advanced Asia”.

It is necessary to recognize that similar oscillations were characteristic of the founders of Marxism. In the 1870s, for example, disappointed with the fact that the proletarian revolution had not succeeded in the West, K. Marx and F. Engels began to set their hopes upon the East – Russia and China. They hoped that these pre-bourgeoisie countries would lead the struggle against capitalism because of their backwardness. A little while earlier, in the 1840-50s, they described Russia as a vivid example of Eastern despotism, an Asian or a poly-Asian country, the bulwark of the reactionary forces in Europe, and of the Slavs as reactionary peoples – thus, they were mortal enemies of European democracy and revolution.

It is obvious that, under the new conditions, V.I. Lenin only continued the orientalizing process of Marxism – as it had been started by its founders. In 1920, Lenin recognized the significance of the East for the purpose of salvaging Soviet Russia and for continuing the struggle against world capital in its colonial periphery. He proposed the idea that Russia, India and China, representing the majority of the population of humankind, would decide the outcome of the anti-imperialist struggle. All this meant, for Lenin, one more deviation from the Eurocentric Marxist orthodoxy and towards direct transformation of the Russian variant of Marxism into anti-Western theory and practice. This was later perfected by J. Stalin through



the creation of the newest variant of Asian despotism, as was earlier predicted by G.V. Plekhanov and K. Kautsky.

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Our research brings us to the conclusion that any attempt to radically transform the Russian society on the basis of Western theories has led to results very far from what had been expected. Figuratively speaking, the impatient aspiration to take a step toward the West in practical life threw society two steps back to the East. This happened because the experiments took place in a non-Western civilizational context; and direct transfer of Western experience to Russia was simply not possible.

As illustrated, the "orientalization" of Marxism in Russia was inevitable and it hardly connected to Plekhanov, Lenin, Bukharin, Stalin, etc. Here, we notice a recurrent historical tendency. Since Peter I – "a Bolshevik on the throne", as N.A. Berdyaev wrote about him – life in Russian society was dominated by a tragic struggle between Westerners and Easterners. Conceptions of the opposition of Russia and Europe and about the world mission of Russia in rescuing humankind were developed. Components of these concepts could be notions of anti-Westernism and a tactical union with the Muslim world. An example of such conceptions is the statement of K. Leontiev who wrote in the 1870-80s about the likelihood that Russia was capable "of swerving from world history, that is, exhausting its potentiality and [was] already growing old". In "this swerving there will be a lot that is anti-European, or to be more exact, anti-liberal and anti-modern,"<sup>18</sup> – or, so he expected. As though foreseeing the way which the Bolsheviks would follow after the Revolution, he wrote: "The permanent danger for Russia is from the West; and is it not natural for her to find and prepare allies in the East? And if this ally by fate becomes the Muslim world, the better. And if by this ally, they call to be Muslimdom, still better".<sup>19</sup> Grandiose plans for transforming the country based on foreign patterns were frequently put into action in Russia. The activity of the Russian Marxists was also in this tradition. However, like all radical reformers brought up in Western culture, they set before themselves the task of radically transforming this huge country, even as they had very little knowledge about her. First of all, they poorly understood themselves, their own outlook, and their value orientations. They did not take into account the relevant ideas of M. E. Saltykov-Schedrin, that "the Tashkent Sirs" considered themselves completely free from the ceremonious attitudes toward civilization in general, and were convinced that they "[stood] on a boundary so remote from the West and not less remote from the East, [thus]

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<sup>18</sup> Konstantin N. Leontiev. *Sobranie sochineniy* (Collected Works). V. 7 (Saint-Petersburg, 1913), p. 315. (in Russian)

<sup>19</sup> Konstantin N. Leontiev, *op. cit.*, V. 5 (Moscow, 1912), p. 28. (in Russian)

Russia [was] called upon by providence...” to perform any radical transformations of the Eastern societies. The Russian Marxists were also not touched by the bitter conclusions of the authors of “*Vekhi*” (Milestones). The superficially acquired conclusions of Western philosophical, sociological and political theories were imposed on the essentially not philosophical, but religious and mythological world outlook of the Russian Marxists. The philosophical and religious life of Russia at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had an influence on this situation, since it was inflated with apocalyptic presentiments and expectations of the end of world history – understood as the end of Western civilization. Therefore, it is not necessary to exaggerate rationalistic elements in Russian Marxism, especially in its philosophical-historical notions. We have already underscored the numerous fluctuations of the Bolsheviks between scientific analysis and myth-creation in their attempts to explain concrete social problems. For an illustration of this situation, suffice it to quote the words of the revolutionary poet at that time:

Our hearts will celebrate a uniform belief  
 Let our numbers be small, it is not a problem! -  
 We shall compel the rest to follow us  
 Like the herds used to scourge.  
 To us driven to a paradise threshold,  
 And the truest way – a direct line; and death to anybody  
 Who dare impudently to stand on our way!  
 The enemy should fall. And fall down forever,  
 Like the life of an overthrown idol!  
 And let rivers of blood be spilled,  
 They will sink the old world.<sup>20</sup>

It is necessary to recognize that the notion of Russian Marxists about the world proletarian revolution was deeply religious. They saw it as the Last Judgment on the exploiters and oppressors; as an act of cleaning humanity through a revolutionary fire before the coming of God’s empire on this earth – Communism.

The perception of the mortal hour of the old world in such an eschatological prospect eliminates Marxism as pretending to be a scientific theory, an important principle of historicism and an approach to the explanation of social development intrinsic to historicism. Analysis of the maturity of the socio-economic preconditions is lost, and so is the degree of organization and consciousness of the proletariat. All this appears unnecessary because for the purpose of winning in the final battle of the forces of world good and evil, attracting allies is justified – even without taking into account their will and desires. They are only brush for the fire of

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<sup>20</sup> Vasiliy V. Kniazhev. *Krasnoe evangelie* (The Red Gospel) (Petrograd, 1918). (in Russian)

world revolution. The judgment of history has already been passed, and consequently, who fulfills it is of no importance. At the moment of world catastrophe, only mass movements matter, and those who compose them – Russian proletarians, soldiers and sailors, Chinese peasants or Muslims of the East – has no significance. Similarly, their beliefs, their moral, political and religious values are of no significance. All the same, after a catastrophic break of the old relations, there will come a wonderful transformation of humankind. The dead weight of the past and its heritage in all its forms can be discarded; determination of the present by the past is thereby abrogated and annulled.

In these conditions, the value of the allies consists not in the affinity of their beliefs to Marxism, but in the degree of their determination to participate in the destruction of the old world. If, after the victory of the Revolution in Russia, the Western proletariat does not hurry with its revolutionary tasks, the revolutionary Muslim East will execute its mission with no less success. As a result, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a complex combination of an “Eastern” variant of the world revolution appeared. To rescue Soviet Russia and push the revolution in the West, it was necessary to wake up the Muslim East with the help of the Russian Muslims organized by the Bolsheviks.

In this circumstance, one more intention is connected to the plan that was characteristic of the activity of the Bolsheviks and which led to unexpected results. This is the contradiction between the ends and the means. They aspired to achieve a victory against the world evil, imperialism, by forging a union with the lesser evil of the Muslim East. In Orthodox Russia, for centuries, Islam was perceived as a dangerous anti-Christian phenomenon; to enter into any contact with it was deemed acceptable only in extreme cases. In such cases it was necessary to whitewash it, to prove that it was possible to deal with it. So, in some cases V. S. Solovyov could prove the closeness of Islam with Christianity. The Bolsheviks tried to prove the existence of a revolutionary potential of Islam in the form of Pan-Islamism, and its anti-imperialistic orientation. However, such a treatment of Islam imposed on those who came in contact with it a certain seal of communication with an infernal world – for which it would pay heavily. In this respect, the destiny of practically all Marxists – publicists and political figures who played with Islam – was tragic.

The problem here is not only in the exclusive claim of Marxism to the souls of the people and in its intolerant quasi-religious attitude to all religions. The major reason, in our opinion, consists in the fact that Islam, by and large, could not, cannot and will never, serve as small change in any political game. An instrumental approach to it is doomed to failure. In the political game, inevitably there comes a moment when Islam turns from a means into an end in itself; from a dependent ally, it turns into a contender. Such a turn of events was always perceived as a basic shock by the European, Russian and Marxist consciousness. When, for example, in Russia, Islam threatened the monopoly of Christianity, V.S. Solovyov saw

in it one of the attributes of the coming of Doomsday.<sup>21</sup> In Soviet Russia, Islam was declared an enemy of Marxism and was subject to liquidation – it was treated as the ideological instrument of exploitation. By the end of the 1920s the need for it as an ally had disappeared; and, as it continued to exist, it became a real contender to Marxism in the Muslim regions of the country.

All attempts to consider Russia as an underdeveloped Western country, and to consider the Eastern values within her as barbarity to be liquidated, should be regarded as a dead-end. In fact, all attempts to ignore the wholeness of Russian civilization – although it has not reached the peak of its formation – should be regarded as barbarity, like any other attempt to accelerate the entry of Russia into the advanced Western world. It is necessary to take into account that the Russian society consists not only of Slavs professing Orthodoxy; but also of peoples related to the Islamic civilization.

Russia cannot escape the question of its relations with the Muslim society as the “Other” – its Muslims are part and parcel of her. The results of the construction of socialism in the Muslim East are too well known. The question is whether the present reformers of Russia are not repeating the mistakes of the Marxists: Eurocentric thinking, a scornful attitude to notions about the Eurasian nature of the Russian society, ignoring the experience of the Russian state in its relations with Muslims, ignoring the large heritage of domestic culture in understanding Muslim society and attempts to find its place in Russian culture. It is necessary to recognize that Muslim society simply is not taken into account in the plans of the reformers who ignore – as the Marxists did – the civilizational aspect of social development.

The Muslim problematic cannot be resolved so long as the new Russia does not define how she conceives herself in the national plan (Slavic or a multinational society), in the religious plan (Orthodox or a secular state equidistant from all confessions), in aspects of the state system (a unitary state consisting of provinces, or a quasi-federation consisting of actually sovereign national-state formations).

The Muslim problem is capable of accelerating the disintegration processes, as neither in pre-revolutionary society, nor in Soviet Russia has it received its basic resolution. In relation to Islam and to the Muslim society in modern Russia, there remain three different negative approaches and sources: the pre-revolutionary Russian Christian culture and state ideology, the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideology and practice, and also the Eurocentrism of Western Christian bourgeois society. What is common to

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<sup>21</sup> See: Yuriy M. Pochta, “Islam i musulmansкое obchestvo v filosofii istorii V. Solovieva” (Islam and Muslim Society in the Philosophy of History of V. Solovyov), *Religia v izmeniyushemsia mire (Religion in a Changing World)* (Moscow: Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, 1994), pp. 66-80. (in Russian)

all of these is that they arose in the context of Christian culture and it was assumed that Islam – Muslim society and Muslim civilization – should disappear because they ceded their place to Western Christian (Slavic Orthodox) civilization or to Communist society, which are supposedly superior.

A serious change in the Russian culture in relation to Muslim society is necessary. This should consist in rejecting the idea of the absoluteness of Christianity<sup>22</sup>, in rejecting a Eurocentric orientation, in recognizing the civilizational pluralism of the modern world, and in having an equal dialogue with Muslim society. Without this, the fate of modern Russia could be similar to that of the USSR – further decomposition and catastrophic disintegration of the state.

Modern Orthodox-Muslim Russia cannot exist as a liberal-democratic society; neither can it exist as a 19<sup>th</sup> century empire. The Muslim problem within it is not yet solved. Certainly, it is not been solved in the West, either; however, in the West there is not a large number of indigenous Muslims. That is why for Russia, solving the Muslim problem is connected with her survival as a united state. At the same time, without consistently solving her Muslim problems, Russia cannot create normal relations with neighboring Muslim societies. Geopolitical unions prompted by the availability of a common enemy (Russia and the Muslim world against the West, or Russia and the West against the world of Islamic fundamentalism) have poor prospects in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Thus, the cultural self-identification and formation of statehood in Russia at the current stage of its history inevitably presupposes a new judgment on the Muslim problematic. This was not done in the former Yugoslavia. The joint coexistence of Christian and Muslim peoples (within the framework of any empire – Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian or Russian) involves serious conflicts and disintegration of statehood in all attempts to realize liberal-democratic reforms while ignoring the civilizational specificity of such societies.

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<sup>22</sup> In this respect George F. McLean proposed an interesting idea that “if ... my goal is to express God as fully as possible then the other religion is not alien and contradictory, but a sister which complements my commitment to God. Hence in their very difference religions need each other, as all tend toward the one absolute and absolutely loving source and goal”. Epilogue. “Dialogue between Religions and Cultures,” *Islam and the Political Order*, edited by George F. McLean and Ahmad Iravani (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005), p. 420.



**PART III**

**MYTH AND LOGOS IN VARIOUS  
CIVILIZATIONAL CONTEXTS**





## CHAPTER XIV

# MYSTERY AS A FORM OF CULTURE

VIACHESLAV NAYDYSH

During the next historical wave of the re-mythologisation of spiritual mass culture, ordinary consciousness is being addressed more often to miracles and mysteries. Like many centuries ago, mystery is becoming a significant and effective component of spiritual life, and also an original object of philosophical-anthropological analysis. One of the interesting aspects of such an analysis refers to certain relations which exist between mystery and myth. From one side, there had always been an aura of mystery around a myth and myth-creation<sup>1</sup>. The myth has always been a mystery for man, and, as a matter of fact, it remains so today. But, from the other side, human mystery is always painted in the colors of myth-creation, and it certainly contains mythological components. The mystery of myth-creation and the myth-creation generating the mystery are the processes, which, at first sight, should belong to completely different phenomena of the spirit. But in reality they are internally and naturally connected with each other in a still unknown manner. The analysis of this interlinking allows one to explicate some of the new moments, which are contained in the deepest idea of the great Russian thinker A.F. Losev: “Any live individual is somehow a myth”<sup>2</sup>. But the individual is a myth in the measure and relation that it is itself a mystery for other people. Thus, we return again to the question: what is a mystery?

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<sup>1</sup> We use the terms “myth” and “myth-creating” broadly, meaning the existence of a historically developed ability of consciousness to produce generalized forms of the evident-sensual figurativeness, the features of which are that the relation of its content to the conditions (objective or subjective) of its genesis and functioning could not be realized, reflected upon or covered logically and rationally by the subject. Consequently they appear as if they were alien, not logical or conceptual; they are being experienced, but they are not explained and interpreted by consciousness. Such an activity of consciousness has in itself an obvious *interest* for it, and is expressed by the subject: the subject’s intentions are directed to the figurative results of this activity, its products are the objects of a volitional self-determination by the subject. In history the primitive mythology is the first, but it is not a unique form of the figurativeness entailed. Numbers of mythic symbols (myth-like, quasi-mythological structures) are present in modern mass consciousness (folklore, literary and artistic characters, quasi-scientific mythic symbols, etc.) as well.

<sup>2</sup> Aleksei F. Losev, *Dialektika mifa – iz rannih rabot* (Dialectics of the Myth – From the Early Works) (Moscow: Pravda, 1990).

Mystery is a special state of the human spirit capable of including in itself and integrating any of its forms. Therefore the mysteries have always been powerful centres of concentration and actualization of the many-sided content of human spirituality. The current of high spiritual intensity that accompanies mystery is the result not only of the content and structural features of mystery, but also of the special position mystery occupies in the system of spiritual forms – and in the dynamics of this system’s functioning within material culture. The said system is a hierarchy of forms that is historically determined. Each historical type of consciousness and culture has its own “mechanisms” of mystery generation, and each developed its own understanding of, and attitude to, mystery. The history of the spirit consists of whole layers of various types of human attitudes to mystery – attitudes that provide grounds for speaking even about the existence of a special “archeology of mystery”. In the deepest layer of this “archeology” is the attitude to mystery in primitive culture and mythology.

Constituting mystery as a form of the development of the spirit assumes a level of consciousness development at which its two leading functions – knowledge and experience of the world – gradually begin to be separated from each other and acquire qualitatively specific contents. The cognitive development of the world and of the forms of its experience should become various ways for the conscious ability to live in order to have a need for the occurrence of such a form of spirit as mystery. In fact, mystery is a reflection and expression of this functional polarization of consciousness. The most ancient chthonistic forms of mythology with their werewolf logic, chaos, disharmony, disproportion, ugliness, fetishism, totemism, zoomorphism, teratology, images of monsters, frights, Titans, Cyclopes, etc., remained as rudiments in the known myths of different peoples rooted in the Paleolithic layers of culture. Apparently these created the image of an awful, but not mysterious world, because mystery as a form of spirit requires not only emotional–sensual participation in life, but also knowledge about it. But in the consciousness of Paleolithic man the affective experience of the world prevails over the cognitive abilities. Here knowledge “is still dissolved” in weakly varied forms of the world’s experience; the world’s images are immersed in a flickering, restless, unruly world of emotions and affects.

Mystery as a form of spirit apparently originated at that level of cultural development when primitive man in his consciousness began to divide the world into two qualitatively different areas – the profane and the sacral. These areas simultaneously defined themselves as two ways of life in the world, two ways of the primitive’s existence. By this division the differentiation of cognitive and affective-value attitudes of consciousness to the world was fixed. The dualism of the sacral and the profane set the horizon of self-determination. This horizon was the “reference system” that helped in the development of what men organized as culture. It enabled one to distinguish between what was within the culture and what was outside it.

What did not pass through the crucible of human activity was outside the culture. Despite all the originality of such a demarcation during the primitive epoch, the basic rule of opposition between the cultural and the pre-cultural worlds was reflected in the primitive consciousness quite objectively. It is different matter that the real attitude is inverted here: the original reality for the primitive is not the profane as would be expected, but rather the sacral.

The sacral is the cosmos, created and sanctified by the gods – it is an inhabited territory resisting the uninhabited, devastated chaos, not capable for any constructive and significant acts for man. Chaos is nonexistence, of which the primitive is horrified. The primitive aspires to exist and to realize his life in an organized and structured world, i.e. in a cosmos, in the sphere of the sacral. Moreover, he aspires to live not only in the sacral sphere of the cosmos, but also to be in the centre of the cosmos, on the axis of the universe. To the primitive consciousness in the profane world, there are no mysteries. This world is horrible but not mysterious. Man would have no interest in the non-sacred world; where there is no mystery, there is no interest. The interest of primitive consciousness in the cosmos is focused on the creation of the sacral world. From the viewpoint of primitive consciousness, the original mystery is concentrated in the sacral.

Also it is important that for the primitive consciousness the mystery is a great force which should be managed very carefully. It cannot be open to all and everyone. To focus on the mystery and remove its cover is to threaten the rhythmic existence of the cosmos and put it under the authority of chaos. If the knowledge of mystery in a family (or tribe) is taken by “them” (foreigners, enemies, other aliens, etc.), then, there is a fatal threat: united with the accessible powerful and dark forces of chaos; “they” are able to harm “us” irreparably, to destroy “our” cosmos.

At the same time, the primitive consciousness includes also a conception of the boundary of mysteries. Mystery is related not to the profane world, and not to the sacral world, but to the spatial and temporal border between the sacred and the temporal. A symbolic crossing of this border is also the basic world outlook for many primitive “ceremonies of transition” (coming of age, marriage, childbirth, initiation into shamanism, joining a secret union, death and the revival of nature, etc.). Overcoming the mystery border assumed a whole complex of rituals and often, very severe actions: isolation from the collective, breaking social connections, studying and understanding the ethno-mythology and theo-cosmology of the given culture, forcing a feeling of fear, deprivation of sleep, exhaustion of the flesh, suggestion, hyperactivation, sometimes suggestion with the help of hallucinogenic materials, etc. The people who crossed this border are considered to have been born twice, struck with mystery and are devoted to it. In each culture this border is set in a special way in accordance with original patrimonial and communal traditions. The culture

is developed and generated in it. This gives the primitive mystery another property – namely, it acts as the basis for ethno-cultural traditions.

In primitive culture, mystery and myth are directly connected with each other. Mystery is encoded in mythology and is ritually reproduced in various ceremonies; the myth is a code of mystery. Ceremonial holidays are reproductions of the mystery. At the same time, they are a decoding and an understanding of mystery. In a ceremony the myth is “worked out” and thus becomes the actual reality (the given), as though it was accessible and conceivable. Myth opens mystery by stating the sacred history of world creation. For those who have become acquainted with myth, the mystery is no longer a mystery. For the primitive, to be familiar with the mystery is the culminating moment in the dynamics of his spirituality.

In the stylistics of primitive culture, the mystery should be open and, at the same time, never entirely open. Mystery has a certain limit or a boundary to which man must aspire. But, at the same time, he should never cross that boundary. Mystery is an inexhaustible myth, and any myth is inevitably a mystery. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*

The unity of the mythological and mysterious was clearly presented in primitive culture. It did not at all disappear with the occurrence of civilization, but it was developed, and it took on new forms. The development of a rational content in ancient consciousnesses, the formation of the first modes of scientific comprehension of the world, the first scientific picture of the world, systems of deterministic interpretation of separate spheres of reality – all these significantly changed the status, content and place of mystery in consciousness. Both the sacral and the profane spheres are essentially transformed. Each of them is being differentiated, and the relations between them have become complicated. As a result, the uniform mystery of mythological consciousness does not disappear at all. On the contrary, the mystery of consciousnesses is even more amplified when it is diversified and broken down into mystery and into the world of miracles. Mystery takes on the functions of a supranatural and also those of the objective side of life that has been alienated from man. Miracles embody the moment of a subjective arbitrariness of the supernatural, which are single volitional acts of the mystery accessible to man. Miracle is a continuation of mystery, and a component directly addressed to man. Miracles are what mystery shows of itself when it “wants” to remind man of itself. The miraculous is formed out of the image of mystery when there is a problem of interpreting its meanings. The miraculous is an interpretation of the mysterious; it is a mark of some states and features of mystery and its possible influences on natural processes and conditions. The miraculous is formed as an original compensator of banal, regular, systematically organized spheres of daily existence. The world of the miraculous is constantly getting features, which are all opposite to the ordinary and trivial world. In its relation to the real world, the world of the miraculous is “the contrary world”.

In the epoch of Hellenism, a short rise of antique rationalism was broken by a powerful wave of remythologization of culture. The spiritual life of society was overcome with a mystical belief in miracles, supernatural and superstitions of different kinds. In the world of miracles and mysteries, man of that epoch felt as if he was in his home environment. His practicalness was unexpectedly combined with his absolute trustfulness, light-mindedness, complete carelessness in what concerned the mystical images produced by mass consciousness. The more senseless the ridiculous messages, rumors, stories, news and conjectures were, the more supporters they had. For example, the main theme of talks and feasts was witches, their adventures, how they exhaust people and animals by their charms, summon storms, fly to Sabbaths, etc. The process of remythologization was reflected in literature as well, and such genres of prose as paradoxography, arethology, and hagiography had great success.

In paradoxography there were unusual, “wonderful”, terrible, horrible natural phenomena, and daily life represented the stories of “eyewitnesses” summoning spirits, wonderful healings, phantoms, walking statues, rising from the dead, etc. Arethology narrated wonderful acts of the gods, their prophets, about rising from the dead, healings and relics. The mystical, irrational and supernatural in human life were put in the foreground. In such products, the main characters are the prophets, miracle men, who are constantly in the most improbable, fantastic situations. Usually the miracles begin from the birth of heroes of this sort: an unusual conception or unusual birth accompanied by special omens and symbols, etc. Destiny drives the heroes to various countries, lands where they live and act: make miracles, heal the sick and crippled, preach, etc. among even the most fantastic people and creatures. During these travels they are exposed to persecutions and “torments” from the side of either authorities or certain malicious and hostile powers. But at the most critical moments, when it would seem already that all opportunities of escape were exhausted, the mystical powers grant unexpected escape – in particular, in the form of revival after which the hero is to be canonized as a god, sacred or heroic depending on the religion within the bounds of which the narration was developed. Arethology has served, in turn, as a direct source for the evangelical apocryphal (not canonized) and hagiographical (“hagiography”, “acts of the martyrs”, legends about monks, etc.) literature.

The polarization of the mysterial into mystery and miracles becomes more evident during the Middle Ages. For the medieval man the main mystery is God. Mystery as God, the supreme regulating principle of life, the one who “rules” the world. The world is a certain mystical unity. It withdraws into itself, there is a mysterious overall matching or similarity, a coherence dominates which produces their similarity, sympathy and antipathy, etc. The main display of this mystical unity is that the world is filled with miracles. God as a mystery is invisible to us; he is inexpressible and not cognizable by the mind. It is easy to know God by means of his creations – including miracles – but it is impossible to comprehend his

image. In early Christianity the restrictions on the aspirations to know God were very strong: “Do not dare to tell a word about him and do not limit God for yourself by intellectual images”. God is a Mystery beyond the bounds of cognitive abilities not only of man, but even of those bearing more divine nature – for example angels and archangels.

God as the main mystery is manifest in a number of small mysteries or miracles. In medieval man’s consciousness, the world was entirely filled with miracles. The person lived with a perception and sensation of the closest interaction – intercommunion of the terrestrial profane world with the world of the divine or sacral. Men were on watch for miracles everywhere because the transition of the divine into the terrestrial, and the terrestrial into the divine is possible at any point of space and at any moment. The life of mystery was justified by the idea of the possibility of interaction between two worlds, the constant meetings of the sublime, sacred, heavenly, divine, on the one hand, with the earthly, perishable, sinful, on the other hand. There were also meetings of the earthly passing life and time with the mysterious divine Eternity. The medieval consciousness, reproducing ambivalent relations between the human and divine, by means of miracles and mysteries, had aspired to elevate its daily routine of life to the level of the universal divine, the eternal. The miraculous intrusion of the sacral into the profane world did not cause much fear, horror and trepidation before the infinite Almighty Mystery or God, as a lofty and exalted feeling of “communicating with the divinity” and expectations of revelation.

In the 12th-13th centuries the tendency for further diversification of the mysterial and allocation in it of three qualitatively original spheres became apparent: the miraculous, miracle-working works as a mysterial divine; the wonderful, as an expression of natural world mystery; magic, often as related to satanic elements of life. If working wonders as a display of God is expected, required and useful (healing, repelling demons, increasing fertility, etc.), then the mysterial and the magical are unpredictable; and they may have the most contradictory and – frequently – undesirable consequences. What is mysterial in mass consciousness proliferates; there are a number of concepts of miracles, made by various “carriers” of the mysterial (giants, dwarfs, fairies, dragons, griffins, sirens, mermaids, etc.) in very diverse situations and with the most unexpected consequences. Since, the mysterial would be absolutely unnatural, the images of the mysterial were formed by the deformation of natural images. The general logic of such deformation was directed from a simple quantitative increase (giants) or reduction (dwarfs) to the mixture of forms (anthropo- and zoomorphic features) and their full distortion, and the combination of the most improbable features (fantastic monsters by Bosch, Breughel, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See: Jacques Le Goff. *L’imaginaire medieval: Essais* (Paris, 1985). Le Goff formulates the concepts of a research program for studying the mysterious

In medieval theology, there were also the first attempts of rationalistic substantiation within the framework of the theology to demarcate between mystery and non-mystery; between the mysterious and the profane. One attempt, for example, was based on the concept that mystery presents eternity with one side submerged so that everything looks differently from the point of view of man than from God's point of view, i.e., from the point of view of eternity. "We see the things as they are in our heart; things are what they are seen to be by God," Augustinus warns and instructs. Between the human (reasonable) and the divine (super-reasonable) views on the world, there is always an insuperable "gap", which basically cannot be settled or overcome by man and his consciousness. The presence of this "gap" actually provides an attribute of the mysterious to life. This concept corresponds to the statement, contained in a Letter of the Apostle Paul, that "the wisdom of this world is madness before God"<sup>4</sup>. In this way, the following concept was formed: the divine world and the human world are organized differently; they are subordinated to different structural principles, different "logics". Thus, the verities of our world are senseless relative to God's verities. Mystery is just what arises at the junction of "different logics, different worlds, and different types of arranging existence. Consequently, the Middle Ages succeeded not only in making existence mystifying by giving an aura of mystery to it, but it also speculated on some aspects of the essence of mystery, although only vaguely.

Searching for rational ways to justify the mystery of life, and the demarcation between the profane and the sacred is attributable not only to medieval Christianity but also to medieval Islam. A detailed creative and interesting analysis of the mystical doctrines existed in the system of medieval Islam – first of all, in Sufism. Their social role, orientation and forms of realization have been studied in the works of Professor N.S.Kirabaev, the well known domestic expert on medieval Islam. Characterizing Sufi theory and practice, he has noted that "the people, who had addressed Sufism, considered that secular life was deprived of beauty and pleasure, justice and freedom; and that man's opportunities were extremely limited: therefore it would be necessary to get away from worldly life, take the path of ascetism, and search for a better world". They deeply understood the nature of "evil" and they raised it to the status of force outside history. They gave absolute value to the criticism and denial of all that is earthly, and thus deprived the earthly of effectiveness. On the other hand, their interpretation of evil and human suffering as integral to this earth resulted in both the idea of searching for "the true world of love", and a posture or attitude of social reconciliation with the inevitable evil in this

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in the Middle Ages: the origin of the mysterious from pre-Christian traditions; relations among the mysterious, wonder-working and magic; the mysterious as a resistance to the Christian ideology; Christianizing the mysterious.

<sup>4</sup> *New Testament* 1. 3, 19.

world. Finally, interpreting evil as the integral to this earth resulted in a mystic-ascetic “leaving of this world”<sup>5</sup>, in developing a concept of spiritual comprehension of life “in its integrity, and of man in his unity. The world as well as man cannot be broken into parts. It is possible to understand them only through intuition, inspirations... recognizing the world domination of an irrational beginning, comprehended in divine love”<sup>6</sup>.

In the modern epoch a new attitude to mystery developed – the image of a “transparent world”. According to that, we live in a world which is fully manifest through the “natural light of reason”<sup>7</sup>. The world may be clearly and completely known by man as bearer of reason, the most valuable of his natural properties. In such a world outlook, there was a strong belief that in the world there were not – and could be no – eternal mysteries; in nature all was subject to the “light of reason”. Sooner or later, all mysteries would be turned into scientific problems and definitely would be completely open to the efforts of human reason. At the same time, it was supposed that while “developing” mysteries, reason itself was not subject to any qualitative changes in its structure, but it always remained constant, once and for all coordinated with nature and itself. In this perception of the world the cosmos, in its wholeness, at least potentially loses all mystery.

By the end of the 20th century, however, the image of a “transparent world” had considerably dimmed in public consciousness. Humankind has made vast efforts to learn nature and its practical transformations; enormous knowledge has been collected, a great number of industrial technologies have been developed and used, a world of man-made civilization has been created. But with all of that, the mystery of the world has not decreased at all; on the contrary it has increased even more. The world is both “transparent” and “not transparent”; it can be experienced, and is full of mysteries at the same time. Even now the universe in many respects remains a mystery in the main thing, which is the most important. Certainly, some of its separate spheres are learned and explained fully enough by the system of human knowledge. Along with progress in science and technics, not only are custom and human morals degenerating, as Rousseau noted, but simultaneously, in an incomprehensible way, the number of mysteries in the world is increasing. This is one of the most interesting paradoxes of the spiritual development of humankind: there are those diverse cultural forms of consciousness in which the mysteriousness of life can be dressed up, but the mysterious character of the world remains permanent. With the growth of cultural-historical action, man’s dependence on the world does not decrease, as might be expected, but on the contrary, it increases. The feeling of the

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<sup>5</sup> Nur S. Kirabaev, *Social Philosophy of the Muslim East: Middle Ages* (Moscow: RUDN), 1987.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Rene Descartes, “Nachala filosofii”, *Izbrannie raboti* (The Beginnings of Philosophy. Selected works) (Moscow, 1950), p. 439.



original mysterious dependence of man on life is coming to replace the super-optimistic concept that it is possible “to remove all mysteries” from nature. Miracles have disappeared, but the mysteries remain. In particular, this attitude increases with the growth of contemporary global problems – first and foremost of which is the unpredictability of the ecological crisis. Apparently, life’s mysteriousness is not a lifeless and obsolete form of spirituality. The universal cultural form, which, at the stage of man-made civilization in our century, sets the horizon of human self-determination, is not obsolete, either.

But the mysteriousness of life and the borders of man’s rational–intelligent acts are defined not by the unpredictability of the consequences of the present in the future. Man has the right not only to be scared to look to the future – quite often, he is also afraid of something forbidden and hidden in the depths of the past, in history and in ancient layers of culture. Man reveres the mysteries of the past, which is connected with the present in a certain continuity. The history of culture is a tremendous collection of such mysteries: mystery of genetic memory (whether or not the history of mankind is reproduced genetically in the mind of man<sup>8</sup>), mystery of the archetypal grounds of the forms of human communication and activity; mystery of anthroposociogenesis, origins of consciousness<sup>9</sup>, incest; mystery of matriarchy; mystery of death, etc. History comprises many forbidden subjects concerning the events which were expelled from its memory, and pronounced nonexistent. As a result an aura of mystery was created around them – they have turned into the mysteries of man’s historical development. These are the mysteries of human history – related to the strengthening in time of new forms of life, to new forms of the cultural-historical order of social life and to the changing types of social regulation.

So, the mysteries are in the past, present and future; mysteries in nature, society, and persons existed, do exist and will exist. So, what is the mystery of mystery?

With this question we switch from the ground of the history of culture or “archeology of mystery” to the ground of a rational-philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of mystery, as a special state of the human spirit. In this analysis a binary structure of mystery becomes important. As an object of philosophical knowledge, mystery appears first as an original state of the human spirit in which, by analysis, two poles or basic components can be clearly indicated: the cognitive and the value–affective. The first is represented by images of mystery, and the second by experiences of mystery. The images of mystery are ideas on the existence of some aspects of life, which, in practice or in principle, are not subject to the

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<sup>8</sup> Probably, a certain role is played by demographic rules here. See: Yuri G. Rychkov, “The Gene Chronology of Historical Events”, *Voprosy Antropologii* (The Problems of Anthropology), (1986. Vol. 77), pp. 3-18.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example: Dmitri V. Gouryev, *The Secret of the Origin of Consciousness* (Moscow, 1997).

cognitive aspirations of man. These aspects are also not subject to man's rational comprehension or to logical mastery; yet, by themselves, in one way or another, they can influence man's ability to live – as can be shown in emotional-affective forms. The experience of mystery is those emotional-affective forms which accompany the images of mystery and which are integrated as well as coexist with these images. One of its brightest and emotionally rich forms is ecstasy.

The binary structure of mystery stipulates an opportunity for three fundamental attitudes of the subject to mystery. The first attitude is value-figurative and emotional-affective. At its basis is the concept that the mystery should *be experienced* by the subject rather than be limited by the expansion of knowledge on the part of the subject. In this way there is a special sort of spiritual life – with mysticism in its basis – which begins to develop around mystery. The second attitude is a cognitive one. In the framework of this attitude, mystery is interpreted as a display of some objective aspects of life. Sooner or later, these aspects may be open, systematized and concretized by means of cognitive activity by the subject. In this way the basic convertibility of a mystery to a scientific problem is recognized, even as it is not obligatory that this be accompanied by a recognition of the obligatory resolvability of any of these problems. The third attitude of the subject to mystery is a philosophical one, and it is in the area of philosophical anthropology. This assumes a rational comprehension of mystery as a complete state of spirit, as a special natural moment in the system-historical dynamics of culture – and, in the unity of the figurative-cognitive and value-affective aspects of mystery. In this philosophical attitude of the subject to mystery, these two aspects act as ambivalent moments of a uniform, general basis. The philosophical approach in particular is called upon, figuratively speaking, to find the key to the mystery of mystery.

First, let us consider in general the specific features of the first of these fundamental attitudes of the subject to mystery. Mysticism is a certain kind of spiritual life, which grows because of a number of forces: from critical attitude to the rationalistic reference points of consciousness; from a recognition of the “errors of reason”; from a rejection of the “proud revolt” of reason against sensual and strong-willed spheres of consciousness or against belief. The denial of rationalism by mysticism combines with a denial of the importance of the cognitive dimension of human spirituality and with a denial of the empirical and rational-logical sources and preconditions of knowledge. In mysticism the main channel to connect man and life is not cognitive, but the emotional-affective part of consciousness. Therefore the centre and culmination point of mysticism is ecstasy, understood as an extreme form of experience, integrating all possible forms of affectivity around the understanding of a direct subjective sensation of life. This is far beyond an individual's experience and is eventually a sensation of mystery.

The sensation and ecstatic experience of mystery are major factors of the mystical life. Mystery gives this life a leading tone and is the main goal of its experience. Ecstasy is an instance of mystical esoterism – an affective state, in which, from the point of view of mysticism, the borders between the subject and the object disappear, when man's soul seizes the mystery, and the mystery seizes the soul. As a result there is a filling of the mystic's soul with an infinite and inseparable sensation of pleasure and self-oblivion, which is developed in the feeling of delight. Mystics justify an above-rational nature of ecstasy as follows: this state is completely indescribable, inexpressible in language; mystics constantly emphasize, that there are no words which could give even an approximate idea and concept of the state of ecstasy. In accordance with the mysticism in ecstasy there are not only the feelings of pleasure, joy and admiration, but also a detachment from certain situations, space and time, and a feeling of power which comes from a comprehension and experience of the accessibility of the Mystery – the mystic's "ability" to make a mystery his own and by that, to turn it into not-mystery for himself. Therefore, as a form of comprehension of mystery, ecstasy acts as a "universal feeling"<sup>10</sup> in mysticism. In the context of mysticism, comprehension of mystery allows man "to enter" other transcendental realities or esoteric worlds and to develop his abilities to "live" within these realities. Transcendental experience is characterized by a feeling of unity with other people, nature and the whole world; by inexpressible uniqueness of emotions; by a feeling of overcoming time and space, hovering above reality and its history; by paradoxicality and infringement of logic; by loss of self-control; by objectivation of the content of one's own concepts, etc.

In the nature of mystery, there is both the, doubtless, powerful, renovating and creative potential of mysticism – and its ability to harmonize the individual's experience in his relations with the world in which he is rooted. These potentially positive characteristics of mysticism have found their application, for example, in transpersonal psychology, the subject matter of which can be defined as "life, development, self-actualization, expression and detection of meta-requirements, limiting values, self-transcendence, intuition, extreme feelings, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, surprise, renovation of the soul, unity, space consciousness, space game, adequate interpersonal relations, realization and expression of transpersonal and transcendental opportunities"<sup>11</sup>. Transpersonal psychology tries, by employing methods of psychedelic therapy to enable one to control the world of experience with the help of hallucinogenic substances—lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and dipropyltryptamine (DPT). For medical and humanistic purposes, – it also

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<sup>10</sup> Ivan I. Lapshin, *Mystical Knowledge and Universal Feeling* (Saint Petersburg, 1905).

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Sutich, "The Emergence of the Transpersonal Orientation", *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (1976. Vol. 8. N 1), p.13.

aims at causing desirable states of consciousness – including “mystical” states.

But the mystery should not, and could not be a monopoly of mysticism. A mystery may, and should, be the subject of rational analysis, concrete-scientific learning, the second fundamental attitude of the subject to mystery. No matter what the attitude to the mysterious character of life, it is possible to claim one thing, that is: man’s eternal, constant and persevering aspiration to comprehend mysteries with his mind. In mystery, a moment of willing is integrated: man tries by his will to turn from the experience of mystery to its elimination, overcoming, disclosure. The other problem is the extent to which reason is capable of opening mysteries and how it cooperates with the sphere of human feelings, assessments and emotional experience while doing so.

Strictly speaking, there is no direct path from mystery to problem. The new European rationalism and the widespread concept that any mystery is just a camouflaged scientific problem are, undoubtedly, both a simplification. Sooner or later a mystery may develop into a scientific problem, but this does not mean that the spiritual mysteries will actually become problems. This statement is not agnosticist because in contrast to a problem, mystery belongs to types of the multilevel organization of life, which, for the present, are not mastered by practical activities and are not reproduced by the available structure of thinking. Consequently, consciousness has to compensate for a lack of “available thinking”. The destiny of mystery as a form of spirituality was not defined on just one plane of man’s cognitive attitude to the world. This destiny is more complex; its content develops under the direct influence of aesthetic, moral, active and other (game, for example) fundamental relations in the “person–world” system, in addition to the cognitive relations.

Mystery and problem differ from each other considerably in terms of the character of reason; they also differ in terms of the functioning of the cognitive and the evaluative faculties. Mysteries are created by the joint efforts of rationally cognitive, figurative, emotional and evaluative aspects of consciousness. Mystery is a form of spirituality, where the knowledge and evaluation of the world – the knowledge and experience of life – are not differentiated from each other, do not resist each other, but rather represent a syncretic unity. This syncretism gives poetry to mystery which is always poetic. Therefore it is not just a motive and object of knowledge, but is also a subject of art, figurative admiration and delight. The mystery of life absorbs man entirely, with both the reasonable-cogitative and the emotional-figurative dimensions of his spirituality. In other words, mystery is present where the division into man’s cognitive, estimative and value attitude to the world becomes relative. Consequently, mystery, like myth, is not, in principle, an interpretive form of spirit.

Taken as a problem, the situation is different – the cognitive already dominates over the valuable, the rational-logical over the sensual-emotional. Consequently, the problem can be resolved, i.e. it can be

transformed by means of rational-cogitative activities into a finite number of accessible tasks so that it can be solved with algorithms; and it can also be transformed into explained and proven knowledge. In other words, the problem can be resolved and “declined”. But mystery has another destiny. Mystery cannot be resolved by the means that are used to resolve problems. Mystery cannot be transformed into rational structures completely and entirely. Reason is able merely to open the veil of mystery – and only slightly; it cannot settle mystery entirely. Mystery can separate its external, superficial, concrete event aspect from itself if this aspect is transformed into problems – into a number of tasks – and if, afterwards, the problems are made suitable to rational-conceptual understanding. But with all of this the deep grounds of mystery do not at all lose their mysterious character. Even the contrary, the removal of any cover of mystery by means of reason usually makes it more mysterious: it “exposes” life in its integrity; it opens the chasms of its infinity, unpredictability and spontaneity. As a result, it moves life even farther away from restriction to a cognitive attitude. In contrast, man is not able to exhaust mystery cognitively and rationally; he can only “carry” it with him.

The function of mystery in spirituality is different from the function of problems. Problems remind man that behind each resolved task there is always a new field of unknowable structural relations pertaining to life. The functions of mystery are different: mystery reminds man of the infinity of life which passes through man, through his spirituality. It reminds man that only by mastering the cultural forms, which have been set historically and are oriented to infinity, can man become man. It is more dangerous to lose mystery than to fail resolving it. The loss of mystery threatens man with a special danger – the loss of a necessary feeling of intensity in his relations with the world, and with the loss of the grounds of his spirituality and, hence, the loss of himself. Therefore, whether or not the problem is resolved *by the natural sciences*, the mystery in its completeness remains expressed and reproduced *by philosophy and mythology*.

The first property of mystery – as determined by philosophical anthropology and reproducible “empirically” – is that mystery attracts man overwhelmingly. The human spirit constantly pines for a presentiment of mystery, which slightly opens a chasm of life for him. The cosmos of human experience is realized with an attitude to mystery. Through his personal comprehension of mystery, man becomes, in a way, an accomplice of a universal or worldwide mysterious action. Becoming familiar with the mysterious and the hidden fills human existence with a special inspiration, a certain supreme ideal sense. Mystery bewitches man; familiarity with it makes man “hover above reality”. Mystery is not a collision of reason with the unknown nor an exit of reason to the sphere of the unknown. Mystery always has in itself a supra-rational feeling of high personal participation in the limiting borders of life, and is accessible to man. Mystery is always an experience of qualitative originality, of the uniqueness of the contact between the aspects of life – aspects both mastered and non-mastered by

man. In mystery man feels himself as the subject; he reveals for himself completely new “semantic fields” of life and new cultural landscapes. Through mystery, man rises up to those boundary levels, where the borders between man and the world, nature and consciousness, life and nonexistence, real and unreal, natural and supernatural become conditional, uncertain, fuzzy and flexible. In mystery the many-sided content of human spirituality soars to the few supreme absolutes of culture. Through mystery man directly feels and experiences his personal existence in culture, feels the participation of his individual and unique life activity in the whole world. Using the images and aphorisms of the educational philosophy of the 18th century, it is possible to say, that man’s hunger, love and attraction to the mysterious rule the world, i.e. these define and direct the highest meaning and guiding orientation of human culture.

Here, in mystery, the slow and regular realization of the life process seems interrupted; events require self-renovation by man, and thus, a new cycle of self-determination. Man aspires to mystery; he gravitates towards it in order not only to experience once again his participation in the sense of the boundary which had been mastered and not mastered in life, but also to test himself: to take one more step in the direction of overcoming his boundaries, the limits of his internal “I”. Becoming familiar with mystery and attempts at comprehending it (along with overcoming it) require a maximum concentration of all of one’s spiritual, “intrinsic” forces. It is not so important that the task of fully comprehending mystery is insoluble in its essence. What is important is that this aspiration provides a qualitative extension of the frameworks of man’s personal life in culture, and, along with this, the level of culture of his personal life. One who does not aspire to mysteries and does not feel their high spirit hovering over existence is spiritually poor. But in order to aspire to open mysteries, one must feel his own dependence on them – man needs a touch of mystery, a “feeling of mystery”.

The border sets the ontological “vectors” of mystery between what is proved and what is not proved, between what is predicted and what is unpredictable. Mystery is a break in the regular process of life activity where man faces a dramatic collision in making a choice; this requires self-determination with respect to the natural order-disorder of life, or the cultural–historical environments. Such situations are usually developed around those “centres” of the human world order, where the unpredictability of life and the results of human actions are concentrated.

The practical development of the world by man is carried out according to the logic of necessary, natural, intrinsic, structure creating, proving connections and relations. This type of connection ontologically defines the rationalistic grounds of culture. But along with this type of connection and relation, there is also another type: a casual, secondary, fluctuating, undetermined, unproving or rationalized connection. These relations do not constitute the structure of complete systems, but serve in the systems only as an auxiliary, accumulating, unstable and unpredictable

factors. In practice, man constantly interacts not only with the first, but also with the second type of relations. At the “turn” of these two types of connections and relations of the world – when they enter the field of one’s practical influences – the border between rational and irrational-mysterious moments of culture appears.

Both the nature and the sequence of the circumstances of daily existence are unique and not repeatable because each also has a permanent charge of mystery owing to the unpredictability of life. Actually man is held in the grip of unpredictability. In the results of any human activity, the goals which direct and regulate activity can never be fully and absolutely realized. This is not simply a display of the “imperfection of human nature” or a necessary integration of the subjective moment into the active process, but is a consequence of quite objective circumstances. In general, our world is arranged in such a way that, in the unique configuration of each event the actual means and circumstances of a given activity individualize the process entailed toward the realization of the goal. In principle, to individualize means to make the final result of an activity unpredictable to the end, or uncertain in some respects. What is this, if not a game of the world with man? Mystery, in its “feature of unpredictability”, is this game.

Mystery as game constantly confronts man with the torments and cross of a choice between life and reason, a choice which may not always be rationally proven. Usually there is an irrational or unpredictable factor that is inevitable. This appears especially clearly in the sphere of interpersonal and social relations. In this world of human communications and social relations the moment of inexhaustibility and unpredictability sometimes appears extremely significant and powerful. The universe of an interhuman dialogue cannot be completely covered by a rational-conceptual approach and comprehension; apparently one is not able to cover such a system as a whole with his/her consciousness. It becomes clear that consciousness is a derivative moment of sociality, proving its functioning, and is also one of the general conditions of social existence. Therefore, interpersonal and social communications demand a constant balancing on the verge of the rational and the irrational, the conscious and the unconscious; there is a demand not only of mind but of heart. And by that there is constantly a potential charge of mysteriousness, incomprehensibility and mystery.

So, mystery is inevitably related to philosophy and mythology. It is inevitably clad in their attires, because it is a boundary area between man and the world. Mystery is always on the border between life and nonexistence, on the verge of limiting the human and the natural, the cultural-historical and the natural, the real and the unreal. Mystery is simultaneously opaque and transparent. It always remains on a semantic boundary, and is comprehended by philosophy and mythology. The exit from mythology transfers the carrier of mystery to a different attitude toward the world – and provides a qualitatively new semantic field of the whole world. This semantic field requires completely new vectors for

understanding life. Mystery is connected to the shift in the relations between the subject and the object, between culture and nature, between man and society – or, between man and the whole of culture. Shifting the horizon of cultural forms in man's life activities, mystery contains a dramatic collision. The world as mystery exists to the extent that man's attitude to nature, cultural-historical orderliness, and the network of interpersonal connections with other people is a mystery. Apparently, the sources of the myth-creating abilities of the human spirit are founded on the same relations.

In order not to lose mystery, one should share it with others and make it a property of social memory. Thus, mystery gets not only a subject-object form of existence, but also a subject-subject one. In this subject-subjective projection, mystery is shown in two ways. First, with regard to form, it acts as a border separating the internal complete spiritual worlds of individuals. By this feature, mystery acts as secrecy – the holder of secrecy aspires to separate oneself from conditions under which it can easily lose its identity and be dissolved in facelessness. This aspiration creates an atmosphere of special emotional intensity around mystery: possessing mystery is a burden for man. Mystery acts in a way similar to the way sin or fault acts: by force, it alienates a person from other people. One aspires to overcome this alienation – that is, to share the mystery with others. Therefore, along with secrecy, mystery gravitates toward collectivity and integrability by connecting the holder of mystery to a generality or collective. If mystery is not to become a self-contained destructive force, it should be shared with others, with a circle of “authorized” persons. So, in primitive times mystery became a spiritual basis for certain types of collective organizations – secret male and female unions, and, later, different religious-philosophical-mystical schools such as the Pythagorean. Also in this integrating role, mystery has always been inseparably linked with myth-creating. Myth as a cultural form of the expression of mystery provided the strengthening and constant reproduction of the mysterious dimension of human collectivity. Thus, mystery exists and is being reproduced in some forms of collectivity.<sup>12</sup>

In its subjective realization, mystery is a “transformed form” of the comprehension of the basic impossibility of realizing the need to resolve the break (or alienation) between the desire to know and the means with

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<sup>12</sup> The elementary forms of this collectivity do not represent any special riddle. Associations founded on direct interpersonal connections (friendship or interests, etc.) belong here. The other question is more complicated: which higher forms of collectivity are fastened by mystery and myth, myth-mystery or mystery-myth? The first of these forms is, certainly, ethnos. Ethnos acts as that cultural-historical (and, probably, biological) generality, which comprises some evolutionary “mechanisms” of a “friendly”-“stranger”, “inner ethnic secrecy” identification and thus is a proper “mystery” and a proper myth (ethno-myth).



which to satisfy this desire.<sup>13</sup> That is why, in that symphony of human feelings in which the whole experience of global mysterious action is embodied, in the spectrum and nuances of these feelings, two dominant emotions stand out in contrast: One recovers the force of mystery; the opposite force, paralyzes man's will. Man aspires to mystery and simultaneously he is afraid of it. Mystery attracts man and simultaneously man rejects it. The difficulty in the "revelation of the great mysteries" is seen here.

From one side, man as the supreme product of nature, is characterized by the need to apply not only reason but also feeling and heart to those secret, mysterious motives of a complete world architectonics, through which the "melody" of world harmony is realized and world unity as a whole is organized. In a world of complete chaos, there are no mysteries. The existence of mysteries proves that the world has overcome a state of absolute chaos; there cannot be another abyss beyond the abyss. Beyond the chaos, there can only be anti-chaos – an organization and structure of life; there can only be the vital cosmos. Mystery with this feature appears as a phenomenon recovering forces that are capable of combining in order to create life. It provides an ability for self-generation into something qualitatively new. This self-generation is a creative performance by man. It is as if man is charged by mystery with a "universal" deep feeling, and is directed to the future ("futurological internationality"), which is open to him as a potentially harmonious reality. In this vital feature mystery embodies a future definiteness orientating the present sense of cultures. Because of this characteristic, mystery requires a sacrament – a symbolized experience of the unity of the past, present and future, of the natural and the supernatural, of the human and super-human. Sacrament is inspiration to be embodied fully in reality meaning. The most widely known and brightest form of sacrament is prayer.

But the mystical character of life is not only a reminder to man about harmony and coordination of the whole. Through mysteries the world connects man to the play of its spontaneous or chaotic beginnings. In mystery, there are not only the harmonious elements of our infinitely many-sided, systematically organized and complete world; there is also the fear, trepidation, or horror in face of the errors of the world – along with its abysses and chaotic aspects. There are the successive and organized,

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<sup>13</sup> Deep phylogenetic sources of the need for knowledge are related by neurophysiologists to the universal requirement of living systems for information, "as aspiration to the new, previously unknown, regardless of its pragmatism value in sense of the satisfaction of any biological and social needs" (Pavel V. Simonov, *A Motivated Brain*. (Moscow, 1987), p. 50). An unconscious feeling of anxiety (an "existential anxiety", according to J.-P. Sartre), experienced in man's soul is apparently an indirect reflection of the constant deep need for knowledge, about the conditions of the subject's inhabitation in this world.

necessary or natural – and justified – tendencies. Along with these, there are also opposite tendencies: intermittence, discontinuity, fortuitousness, randomness, disorganization, spontaneity, groundlessness of things – each with its own properties and relations. These tendencies are the ontological ground of that part of attitude which creates psychological moods and motives, which are expressed by this aphorism: “in each abyss is its own abyss”. Having expressed, not proven, the casual and chaotic elements in life, mystery is connected with the feeling of the tragic moments of human existence. As once successfully noted by Nietzsche, “If you are looking down an abyss for long, the abyss will look into you too”. Mystery is an integral element of many human tragedies. A mysterious “look into the abyss” causes in man a fear of life, which makes man a captive to mystery.

Man has been captured by fear. In that state one feels as though he is at the brink of an abyss; he loses his spiritual stability; his freedom is limited; the range of his actions becomes narrow. His will is locked; the possibility of selecting actions and deeds is sharply reduced. In the sphere of communication, people’s direct-vital interactions become desocialized; the world of communication becomes de-culturalized; and interpersonal communications are submerged into an original biological abyss. Man becomes a captive of “naturally defined” passions: many circumstances of his daily existence are brought under the biological programs of behavior, instincts, rhythms. Man retires, breaks off his communications and aspires to spiritual self-isolation. In his sense of life, natural values begin to dominate; and cultural forms of life recede. The fear, caused by mystery, may develop into horror when the paralysis of activity and break of communication systems brings man to the edge of existence. The state of horror is a presentiment of disaster, an anxious presentiment of the edge beyond which there is nothing – neither mystery nor man.

As a striking example, it may be that atmosphere of fear, which was experienced at the end of the Renaissance in some countries of Western and Central Europe. With widespread pessimism, fear and mass phobias ruled in society and in the souls of people. The feelings of fear, guilt, and sin were extremely strained and spread in all sections of society, “scenes of death and violence are everywhere”.<sup>14</sup>

They were afraid of everything: unknown countries, where terrible monsters ruled; of strangers, foreigners, believers of different religions; of all that was new and unusual, of hunger, wars, epidemics, death and suffering afterlife (the theme of the “death dance” was widely used in art); of the mischief of evil spirits; of the evil eye, magic, the dead, werewolves; of neighbors, from whom they could expect magical actions; of an unfavorable arrangement of stars; and of the Antichrist, Judgment Day, etc. Increased by hearing of these repeatedly, the fears contributed to

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<sup>14</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Le peche et la peur: La culpabilisation en Occident (XIII–XVIII siecles)* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), p.123.

demonomania, “witch hunt” for revolts, national disturbances, developing heretical movements, mass psychoses.

So, we have to pay for the “feeling of mystery“, and sometimes the cost is very high. Its name is fear. The “exit” from the state of fear may be gradual and slow, related to the comprehension of real, rational opportunities to overcome a mysterious sensation, or fast, momentary, situational, emotionally affective, for example, with the help of a laugh.

At the same time, it would be incorrect to understand fear exclusively as a destructive, destabilizing force. Fear has another function – as constructive and organizing the will. Having touched the deep motivation – requiring structures of mentality – fear can be the strongest means of paralyzing man’s will, as well as the greatest organizer of purposeful activity and extraordinary deeds. Fear is capable not only of paralyzing man’s spirit, but in some cases it can act as a powerful will-organizing centre of individuals. It can also be a factor for concentrating and directing the activity of the subject. In many cases, in the state of fear, one demonstrates activity at a level which one could not even dream of before and overcome obstacles which one could not handle earlier. Furthermore fear is from those negative emotions (hunger, pain, loneliness), which under some conditions “strengthen the need for contacts and accelerate the process of socialization“<sup>15</sup>. This factor makes fear a powerful means of socio-normative regulation.

Is it possible to present somehow the “logic of fear” – and by that to open slightly the “feeling of mystery” with the help of concrete-scientific knowledge? Certainly, to some extent and in some special forms. Fear influences all aspects of human spirituality, including those that are deepest. It is one of those extreme forms of spirit connected to the activation of deep and usually inaccessible structures of consciousness. Fear is capable even of building bridges from consciousness to the subconscious and the unconscious. Not accidentally, the Freudian outlook says that in the sphere of consciousness, fear is presented as the basic “mechanism” for replacing the unconscious. That is why comprehending and understanding the “structure of fear” assume the skill to recreate the integrity of consciousness from all displays of its elements, structure and hierarchical organization.

Modern transpersonal psychology sets this problem as a matter of objective understanding of the laws on the development of experiences from superficial states to deep ones, i.e. a revelation of their “logic” – including that of fear. In this way it becomes clear that fear, and other psychodynamic experiences do not appear in a psychological vacuum. Rather, they appear in psychological environments, and have certain preconditions. Further, they are consolidated around some special conditions, “virtual” centres, or systems that condense man’s psychological experience.

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<sup>15</sup> Pavel V. Simonov, *A Motivated Brain*, p. 27.

These systems are formed on the basis of combining memories of one or another bright period in the life of the individual. These memories are filled with similar affective-emotional content. Here, there is an assumption that the most fundamental systems of the condensation of psychological experience are related to experiences at the perinatal level.<sup>16</sup>

Surely all the wealth of emotional life in general, and experiences of mystery in particular, cannot be limited to several matrices of human psychodynamics that are based on the experience of perinatal feelings. Taken alone, this schematization is certainly one-sided. It is clear that the systems that condense psychodynamic experience do not remain permanently in an individual's lifetime. In their development, the systems submit to certain rules, which have to be clarified. So, the ontogenetic characteristics can be fully explained if they are supplemented with phylogenetic characteristics. Therefore not only the ontogenetic, but also the phylogenetic aspects of a given problem should be revealed.

Phylogenetic aspects are open, especially in connection with the role of stressful factors in anthroposociogenesis. The point is that a contradictory nature of fear appears, when it is presented as a neuropsychic stress-creating factor. In this role fear acts as a destructive force, which disturbs the normal functioning of consciousness – for some time fear throws neuropsychic processes back to their animal, pre-human level. It also paralyses the neuro-endocrine mechanisms that regulate physiological processes. For a long time, this conception was dominant in medical and biologic researches: the physiological consequences of stress were interpreted as negative only, and their evolutionary results were not studied at all. The turning point in these concepts took place in the 1970s-1980s. The first publications look into not only the negative role of stress but also its positive role. Further, the physiological consequences of stress in ontogenesis were specified; and the studies also drew attention to the importance of exposure to stress or stressful pressure in the evolution of man and his ancestors. A new concept was developed, according to which “stress is a necessary condition and attribute of life, and full elimination of stress is as unreal, as harmful”<sup>17</sup>. Stressful conditions have played an especially important and constructive role. And fear is one of their main versions in the evolutionary development of man.

Recent research shows that the morphophysiological evolution of man was connected most closely with the changes in the central system of neuro-harmonic regulation. By sharply changing the harmonic status of an organism, stress serves as a powerful factor and accelerates the process of evolution in the hominid line. This is caused by the following: under psycho-emotional stress, a portion of one's heredity is sharply increased

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<sup>16</sup> Stanislav Grof, Joan Halifax. *The Person in Front of Death* (Moscow–Kiev, 1996), pp. 63-66.

<sup>17</sup> Dmitri K. Belyaev, “Genetika, obshestvo, tchelovek” (The Genetics, Society, Person) in: *Person in the System of Sciences* (Moscow, 1989), p. 163.

with regard to attributes. For example, there is information on the influence of stress on the frequency of crossover and recombinational variability, on the changing of heterochromatisation of genetic material, etc. Natural selection in the hominid line on stress-stability has resulted in destabilization of early systems of ontogenesis and has sharply increased hereditary variability, and thereby, accelerated the creation of forms. Thus, the sources of “feeling a mystery” and of fears accompanying this feeling are deeply rooted not only on the borders of the natural and the cultural worlds, but also in the ontogenetic and phylogenetic laws of evolution from human ancestors through thousands of years.

So the key to the secret of mystery is in man. Mystery always passes through man, his consciousness, soul, attitude, outlook; mystery combines with man’s life experience. Finally, all the basic mysteries of life are continued and proved in the mysteries of the human ability to live. Consequently, that the main mystery of the world is man, is true: man is the main mystery of life. Through man’s mysteries the world is not just “playing” with him, but also embodies in him some of his most fundamental properties. At its basis this embodiment cannot be anything other than mythological. In mystery, man feels the universe as a whole, and interprets it through the integrity of his many-sided personal life; he experiences himself as an active, dynamic and constructive part of this whole. The sensation of mystery, dressed in mythological clothes, allows one to experience the world as a certain whole. This means that mystery is inherent not in the natural world (that is, not “of itself”), not in a society in its objective connections independent of man, but in a special type of relation between man and the world. Not all of the relations in the “world–man” system are characterized as inevitably mysterious. Rather, they are characterized only as universal relations, i.e. relations in which there is a deep internal unity of man and world, and consequently, society and man directly act as interdependent parts of an integrated whole. These are connections and relations, which close the world into a solid whole, and transform nature, society and man into an internal unity. The real mystery is only what belongs to the universal connections and relations of man and the world. Mystery inevitably becomes a mystery of man in the measure that it “penetrates” the general, universal aspects of life and reflects human existence. With this same inevitability, it takes the form of myth.



## CHAPTER XV

# THE QUEST FOR THE ORIGINAL LOGOS: THE LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

NATALIA PETYAKSHEVA

Latin American philosophy as an original phenomenon in the history of philosophy evolves not by virtue of the natural processes of acculturation, assimilation and continuity, but as a result of “introducing” a complex of ideas and ideologies from other cultures. Because of these circumstances, the following concepts: “Latin American philosophy” and “philosophy in Latin America” are distinguished. The latter is academic; “university” philosophy has more than four centuries of its existence since the discovery of America or the Spanish conquest. Within this framework of academic philosophy the classical forms of traditional philosophy are discussed. The idea of actual “Latin American” philosophy, which indicates not simply thought in the geographical area, but also its own theme of reflection “about the American”, appeared later<sup>1</sup>. Its European philosophical heritage had not only the function of education and liberation (that, undoubtedly, took place), but, according to the Latin American historians of philosophy<sup>2</sup>, also the function of strengthening spiritual dependence on, and submission to, colonial culture.

The Latin American “philosophy of liberation“(PL)<sup>3</sup>, which emerged notably in in the 1970s, is considered by many researchers and its representatives as the first actually Latin American “logos”, which in full measure meets the “identity” and “authenticity” requirements, proclaimed by Peruvian A. Salazar Bondy. The period when “to speak about the Latin American philosophy was to tell about the European philosophy in Latin America“<sup>4</sup> has already passed; Latin America has created its own philosophical climate. According to the Uruguayan philosopher, A. Ardao, the philosophy of liberation has reached the stage not merely of

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of an actual American philosophy in a clearly expressed form was advanced in the middle of the 19th century by Argentine thinker J. Bautista Alberti (1810-1884).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g. L. Sea’s works, E. Dussel and others.

<sup>3</sup> In domestic historico-philosophical researches attention has been paid to this phenomenon of modern philosophy. See, in particular, the articles by Eduard V. Demenchonok: *The Philosophy of Liberation*; Natalia I. Petyaksheva. “The Ethical Philosophy of Enrique Dussel”, *From the History of Latin American Philosophy of the XX century* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Bondy Salazar A., *Sentido y problema del pensamiento filosofico hispanoamericano* (Lawrence, 1969), p. 13.

“philosophy in Latin America, but of Latin American philosophy”.<sup>5</sup> Later (in 1978), the Peruvian philosopher Fr. Miro Quesada,<sup>6</sup> declared that Latin American philosophy successfully combined “two functions: to state the universal character of philosophy and to realize its own regional conditions”.<sup>7</sup> In the “philosophy of liberation” he saw a natural display of the humanistic and democratic potential of Latin American philosophy, and, at the same time a specific response to the situation of dependent development that prevailed in Latin America.

For a long period, Latin American philosophy came to actuality through the perception of ideas from European philosophical thought. Philosophy of liberation brought a new stage in the development of philosophical reflection in Latin America; it claimed a conceptual and systematic level of understanding the social and cultural experience of the Continent. It is through philosophy of liberation, that philosophy receives its “Latin American appearance and language,”<sup>8</sup> and thereby, is different from other philosophical cultures – in particular, from the dominant European type which suppresses other manifestations of rationality. In foreign and domestic philosophical-critical literature,<sup>9</sup> the following opinion has become firmly established: Latin American philosophy had already acquired a continental character, but before it did that, it had to go through a stage of development within national borders. Despite the existence of national distinctions, there are enough general elements, which allow Latin American philosophy to be considered as a single whole – and on a continental scale. If from the time of its emergence, philosophy of liberation claimed to express a “continental consciousness”, now, after a quarter of a century, it begins to acquire features of intercontinentality. It has followers and supporters outside of the continent: in Europe (Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy, England) and in the USA – in addition to followers or supporters in Latin American (especially in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Columbia).

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<sup>5</sup> Arturo Ardao, “Funcion actual de la filosofía en Latinoamérica”. en: *Rev. de filosofía de la Univ. de Costa Rica* (San Jose, 1977, № 39), p. 204.

<sup>6</sup> At the XIX World philosophical congress (Moscow, 1993) Fr. Miro Quesada was elected a new president of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies.

<sup>7</sup> Miro Quesada Fr., “Posibilidad y limitas de una filosofía latinoamericana” en: *Rev. de filosofía de la Univ. de Costa Rica* (1978, № 43), p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> Raul Fornet-Betancourt, *Hacia una filosofía intercultural latinoamericana* (San Jose, C.R.: DEI, 1994), p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g.: Jorge E. Gracia, *Latin American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1986); Roberto S. Goizueta, *Liberation, Method and Dialogue: Enrique Dussel and North American Theological Discourse* (Atlanta: Scholars Publishing, 1988).



The philosophical concepts representing philosophy of liberation were enunciated for the first time in the 2nd National Philosophical Congress (Córdoba, Argentina, 1971). In 1973 in the *Nuevo Mundo* magazine (Buenos Aires), a special issue<sup>10</sup> was devoted to the reports of a group of young philosophers who tried to break off from the “official” line in philosophy prevailing at that time in Argentina and representing the West-European philosophical tradition. They considered this action a necessary condition for the formation and development of the philosophy of liberation. Thus, in the beginning this philosophy stood in opposition to European philosophy.

Nevertheless, its formation and development was always connected to an internal reorientation within the West-European philosophical thinking – as was the Latin American philosophical idea in general. In particular, A. Salazar Bondy paid attention to this feature of Latin American philosophy. He has emphasized that in the development of Latin American philosophy, there was a parallel evolution: The development of Latin American thinking ran parallel to the processes taking place in European and North American thought. Changes in Latin American thinking coincide with the changes occurring in Western philosophy to such an extent that it is possible to say: “The sequence of stages and prevailing trends is caused by direct changes in European thinking”<sup>11</sup>. Thus the history of Latin American philosophy represents a consistent reproduction of the basic directions in European philosophy. One can observe a delay in this continuity with Latin American philosophy being a response to, or an “echo” of, European thinking. For example, if European positivism had become firmly established in the 1840s, the process in Latin America took place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The existentialist frame of mind was developed in European philosophy in the atmosphere of the First World War; in Latin America it reached its apogee in the 1960s-1970s. Now various ideas and methodologies of phenomenology, hermeneutics, Marxism, postmodernism and other philosophical doctrines are actively involved in understanding the original historical and cultural experience. In fact the Latin American idea is, in certain respects, a continuation of West-European philosophy because it was developed with the influence of European philosophical ideas. Thus, there is a recognizable cultural mimicism and intellectual conformism in Latin American ideas – in particular, in the early stages of its development.

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<sup>10</sup> Based on the reports the following book also has been published: *Hacia una Filosofía de la Liberación Latinoamericana* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Bonum, 1973); See the review of the given work in Russian: *The Philosophical Idea of the Modern Latin America* (Moscow: INION, USSR Academy of Science, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Salazar A. Bondy, *Sentido y problema del pensamiento filosófico hispanoamericano* (Lawrence, 1969), p. 36.

Thus, in Latin American philosophy there is nothing that would not exist in Western philosophy. However any adoption of ideas, image or judgments is interpreted here through the prism of “difference”. After ideas had been employed in continental history and culture, they ceased to be identical to their initial sense, which arose from a different cultural and civilizational context. As a result of regular revisions of European philosophy by representatives of Latin American thinking, many conceptions and ideas which are “not working” for the idea of originality, recognition of the “Other” or exteriority, are reinterpreted, re-defined, or, quite often, are given a new paradoxical sense. According to Latin American philosophers such an “exemption” from previous senses also means “destruction” by means of which they try to define the authenticity of philosophizing and philosophy along with its tasks and functions. At the same time, Latin American philosophizing remains open to universal matters and offers a way for human realization.

From the foregoing, the ideas of philosophy of liberation appear to be opposed to the general tendency of modern philosophy. This tendency is directed toward the subject concept: when searching for an intelligible principle, a person is considered as a simple combination of parts or elements from various rational and ontological systems. These systems have nothing in common with a person as such. Thus, in structuralism the rules, clear forms, universal structures and complexes take primary value, and lead to the person’s “disappearance”<sup>12</sup>.

Philosophy of liberation opposes the rationality of “popular wisdom” which has “taken roots” in cultural philosophy. It also opposes “hermeneutic rationality” which opens the “Other’s” exteriority to synthetic constructions of regular classical reason. Further, it attempts to adjust humanity to the impersonal, intelligible grounds that exist in modern discourse. This implies, that the philosophical idea should be reoriented from the substantiation of general and intrinsic matters to an understanding of existential distinctions. In that case, reason – in its universality and

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<sup>12</sup> The problem of the “disappearance” or even “death” of the subject in modern philosophy has been found in various versions of structuralism (from Levi-Strauss and Barth to Lacan and Foucault) as a result of the methodological programming of the objectivity of knowledge. Language is considered preferable to the subject, because language structures are objective even as they are abstracted from comprehension and from the experience of the speaker. The subject is treated as something derivative of the functioning of objective structures. Rejection of the subjectivity principle in a traditional sense, along with the disintegration of the subject as the centre of the system of representation, takes its completed forms after a transition to poststructuralism. However, here, in particular during Foucault’s last period of creative work, one can observe the tendency of “revival” – that is, a return to the person, and, therefore, an original ontology of the subject. (See about this: Ilya P. Ilyin, *Poststructuralism. Deconstructivism. Postmodernism* (Moscow: Intrada, 1996), pp. 75-76.

ideality – goes to a substantiation of details: Only a few valid inferences from general principles are retained; and the traditional – normative and practical – philosophy is replaced by an ethics. This has been related to humanity from of old and has lived in language as an expression of a certain person's attitude to the world, but until now it has appeared only occasionally. And this is the turn in modern ethics and philosophical ideas; it is indicated by post-modern philosophers, in particular, J.-F. Lyotard, J. Derrida, J. Vattimo, etc. The ideas of philosophers about a "cleansing" in a certain sense move in the same direction of strengthening humanity in its variety.

From the positions presented above, one can reach a preliminary conclusion: national philosophical culture is integrated into the modern philosophical dialogue. It participates in cross-cultural interaction after it has reached a level of integrity and system arrangement, which makes it accessible and usable for conceptualization, i.e. when it has acquired features of universalism.

Latin American philosophy meets the proposed criteria. After passing the period of "national" philosophy formation (Mexican, Argentinian, etc.) and reaching the continental level, Latin American philosophy now demonstrates universalism by putting the problems with a universal character into original forms. Among these problems are: the originality and identity of cultures – along with their commensurability; deciding a question equally on the basis of universal and regional matters – and, accordingly, overcoming universalism and relativity in the development of philosophical knowledge; an inter-cultural model of philosophy; uniting moral, ethical and political principles, through and from Latin American discourse, etc. These are undoubtedly of general interest to philosophical analysis. A special position in this line is occupied by the questions of 1) the person, who is not considered as an abstract being with the capability to make an ideal choice, but is limited in his opportunities; 2) an "Other" or vulnerable rational being whose lawlessness raises questions regarding the responsibility of others. The approach to the "Other" is a way of penetrating a person's "existence, as specified in a different way". Only through the idea of a different or "other" can humankind enter existence as such and understand its meaning.

In this case, for the purpose of historical and philosophical perception, an unconditional interest is presented in the "turns" of modern philosophical discourse, with a surprising "migration" of ideas which guided a new channel of original philosophizing. In the beginning of their evolution, the representatives of philosophy of the liberation shared the tendency that was current in existential and anthropological European philosophy. They turned their attention from the theory of knowledge to the area of history and culture. These aspirations coincided with the search for an "original" philosophy by Latin American thinkers. This search is of universal value, and was original, i.e. historically determined as "here and

now” in Latin America; it grew from the historical and cultural developments in the region.

As a rule, the theoretical constructions of Latin American intellectuals representing the philosophy of liberation are characterized by eclecticism, a combination of traditionalism, modernism and postmodernism, radicalism and conservatism, practicality and utopianism, nationalism and socialism, etc. It is necessary to take into account a certain “utilitarian” feature of this idea and a theoretical detraction of the discourse. This is explained not only by the “youth” of the Latin American idea, but also by deliberate populist claims that express the “voice” of peoples from countries of the “third world”. These countries are affronted, held as outcasts and are excluded from the cultural dialogue conducted by the countries of the “first” world. The Latin American idea has always been characterized by ethical, practical and social orientations, as well as by its emphasis on value when analyzing philosophical problems. Here the traditional philosophical problems also become “utilitarian” and are considered through the “national” prism: the problem of existence turns into the problem of Latin American being; and, the philosophy of person appears as the philosophy of the Latin American person. The nature and essence of philosophical knowledge are studied, as a rule, by comparing the ratio of universal and regional (national) philosophizing; philosophy of history turns accordingly into a philosophy of Latin American history. The influence of cultural and historical experience is a determinant here. The mixture of historical, theoretical and ethical standpoints is probably the most paradoxical phenomenon in Latin American ideas: the historic fact of the *conquista* turns into a meta-ontological point of expansion for Latin American critical discourse.

As philosophy of liberation pretends to be a philosophy of the masses to propagate new concepts it developed of the world and the person, it is determined to involve not rational but rather “emotional” arguments. Thus, it “breaks” one of the conventional requirements of modern philosophical discourse, namely, the requirement of analytical (Western by its sources) philosophy regarding the advantages of demonstrative arguments over claims based on emotions and postulates of belief. A similar style of philosophizing was characteristic of the so-called “founders” of the Latin American philosophy. One of them, Mexican philosopher, José Vasconcelos, connected the possibility of original philosophy with the idea of an originally universal spirit inherent in the emotive Latin American race, based on feelings of beauty, love and freedom. The emotive philosophy should correspond to Latin Americans as an ethnic category – a universal type of people and representatives of the “space race”. In fact, arguments of an emotional character and the moralistic complexion of opinions are characteristic of Latin American

intellectuals. In this connection it is necessary to note that socio-historical emotions are only original material for transition to a conceptual analysis of experience that is gained during the interaction of philosophical cultures and traditions.

Philosophers of “liberation” assert that the “forms of thinking” are diverse and are specific to each people and culture. This is because the forms are developed under the influence of objective situations in which a subject is situated. Forming the world of feelings, these forms function as criteria for the interpretation and estimations of various facts and events. Thus, these forms of vision, thinking and evaluation are constituted as the result of long historical and cultural experience and are aprioristic forms – but not Kant’s pure reason. They are also historical reason which creates the structure of the national consciousness for each nation. For the philosophers of “liberation” (in particular, H. de Sana, J.C. Scannone, R. Koush), the references to historical reason, which can explain the essence of the Latin American ethos, are the development of the idea of the modern French philosopher, Field Riker. The main point of this idea is that “Each nation has an ethic and mythical basis of their culture which stipulates an anthropological necessity in a special language<sup>13</sup>. From these positions symbolic and mythological language is considered to be a more adequate language for the “Latin American” experience.

From the point of view of analytic philosophy, Latin American philosophy can be easily rejected as technically (formally and logically) unfounded and excessively politicized in character. The problems of the Latin American and his history, and the originality of culture (as existential problems in general), cannot be strictly systematized and analyzed in terms of logic and grammar, and, consequently, do not meet the analytical criteria of “real” philosophy. Analysis, which has become a conventional fact, transforms philosophy into a style of thinking, a tool with the help of which it is possible to resolve certain problems. However, the understanding of philosophy as knowledge of certain reality is abolished here. The accentuation of the pure technical character of philosophy deprives it of its object, and transforms it, according to Mexican philosopher L. Sea, into “formulas”. A. Roig, one of the prominent representatives of liberation philosophy, shares this opinion. He sees a certain danger to the Latin American idea if analytical procedures are strictly applied to it. Absorption in the analysis of values and structures of thinking leads not only to formalization of philosophical knowledge, but also – and especially – to its being deprived of historical content<sup>14</sup>.

In this context, aversion to analytical philosophy by the representatives of liberation philosophy can be explained. However, here again, there are adherents of the analytical style of philosophizing, in

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<sup>13</sup> See: *Hacia una filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana* (Buenos Aires, 1973), p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> *La filosofía actual en América Latina* (Mexico: Grijalbo, 1976), p.138.

particular, in the person of Peruvian Fr. Miro Quesada<sup>15</sup>, who is convinced that only by leaning on analysis, logic and philosophy of science is it possible to achieve an “original” philosophy and avoid social and spiritual dependence. Everyone who is capable of understanding the arguments should grasp an idea that has been rationally proved<sup>16</sup>. From the continental positions, Miro Quesada considers it possible to investigate not only the problems of the Latin American world, but also traditional problems of classical and modern philosophy.

E. Dussel has presented attempts to compromise with analytical philosophy. In the “specific” reality that philosophy of liberation studies, and from the position of a “specific” person, generating a Latin American discourse is not only an opposition to the Western universalizing idea, but it also enables a “new look” into the philosophical schools and the directions they represent. This new look is proposed as a preparatory or instrumental knowledge, because it aims at developing the required methodological conditions for a universal philosophical discourse that is original – a discourse, which is philosophizing as such. At the same time, thinking will always be done from a certain position or premise. In this case instrumental knowledge (such as philosophy of language, philosophy of science, etc.) can be considered as phenomena caused by the needs of a modern information society – a society which requires methodological clarity and accuracy in thinking. However, instrumental knowledge cannot be considered capable of demonstrating a naturally original philosophy unless, within the framework of its concepts, attempts are made to reveal the limiting bases of philosophizing, and thereby to turn to metaphysics. With metaphysics, in the words of Dussel, what results would be a “hegemonic” philosophy: pretending to express the universal. In effect, instrumental theories will have denied other discourses<sup>17</sup>.

The relation of philosophy of liberation to the postmodernist idea is also ambiguous. Western postmodernism has noted the situation of pluralism in philosophy, and recognized that in world philosophy there were various national and philosophical cultures, which could not be reduced to uniform models (not reducible to Eurocentric “norms”) for philosophizing. These cultures “break” world historical and philosophical standards. This explains why, at the first stage of “liberation” ideas, many supporters of philosophy of liberation developed their concepts as a way of creating a new, postmodern, problem field of philosophical consciousness (Dussel, Scannone, etc.) – but they did this on “American ground”. In E.

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<sup>15</sup> At the XIX World Philosophy Congress (Moscow, 1993) Fr. Miro Quesada was elected president of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies.

<sup>16</sup> Miro Quesada F., *Despertar y proyecto del filosofar latinoamericano* (Mexico, 1974), p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Enrique Dussel, “Hipótesis para una historia de la filosofía en América Latina”, *Ponencia* (Bogotá: USTA, 1983), p. 421.

Dussel's opinion, the Latin American idea which comes from the position of the "Other" (*Otro*, an oppressed person from the "third world") represents a unique and real postmodern philosophy<sup>18</sup>. Postmodernism had been considered by this Argentine philosopher as thinking that was directed to "returning the Other", and by that, to overcoming the ethical solipsism of West-European philosophy. However in recent works, with an understanding of the unacceptability of the post-structural "death of the subject" (in other words, "death" of the "Other") to liberation philosophy, there has been a retreat from European postmodernism. This is evident in the works of Dussel's follower and disciple, Spaniard M. Moreno Villa. In his interpretation, philosophy of liberation appears to be a philosophy of meta-modern style, which leaves behind Western postmodernism and reveals the "other side of life" in the modern world<sup>19</sup>. This is an obvious attempt to overcome the monologism of the classical discourse of the modernist philosophical project from non-European perspectives. As regards exteriority, this attempt is also in contrast to the post-modernists, who represent the "Other", not only on behalf of Latin America, but also of the whole Third World. The question is a concern for philosophy on the world periphery, on "barbarism" in the oppository language of "barbarism vs. civilization".

Philosophers of "liberation" reject postmodernism as hypercritical thinking that aims to destroy all possible grounds for the present. In this context postmodernism, as it is known, is connected to ideas like "end of history", "end of ideology", "end of philosophy", "death of the subject", etc. This "end of all" postmodernism, in A. Roig's opinion, poses the threat of criticism turning into ultra criticism. In this case, postmodernism endangers the rational-critical basis of philosophizing as such, and undermines the value of human consciousness which philosophy represented until now. In this respect, postmodernism in philosophy is considered a step backward, as regressive and disarming consciousness. Consequently, A. Roig concludes: attributing "philosophy of liberation" to the postmodernist position would transform it into something unreasonable and it would not allow the peoples of Latin America to affirm themselves on the philosophical level. Moreover "Latin Americans are ready neither to 'close history', nor to 'be closed'"<sup>20</sup>.

In turn, the Latin American philosophy of liberation offers its own variant of opposition to the modernist philosophical project. Deconstruction of the overwhelming modernist style of discourse,

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<sup>18</sup> See: *Hacia una filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana* (Buenas Aires, 1973), p. 125.

<sup>19</sup> See: Villa M. Moreno, "La filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana" mas alla "de la filosofía europea", *Carthaginensia*, vol. VIII, N 13-14 (1992), p. 443.

<sup>20</sup> Arturo A. Roig, "Mis tomas de posición en filosofía", *Concordia* (1993, 23), p. 87.

criticism of Logocentrism and Eurocentrism are related in the philosophy of liberation to a re-understanding of the world history of philosophy. The classical paradigm of historico-philosophical development, which represents the “modernist project” in European philosophy, claimed to be universal and to have the capability to acquire “the truth of life”. Relative to national philosophy, this meant that it received its sense only because of its connection to the absolute completeness of the primary sense that is included in European philosophy and culture. The European model of “world philosophy” developed gradually because, in the center of the value-system of coordinates in the modern European history of philosophy, there was the historico-philosophical development of Europe. The historico-philosophical concept of Hegel has the most precise logical-theological interpretation of the world historico-philosophical process. Thus was universalism fixed. Undoubtedly, it can be explained by the objective processes of scientific knowledge, on the one hand<sup>21</sup>, and real processes of a gradual affirmation of European civilization as a universal model of the social and cultural dynamics of mankind, on the other.

In the philosophy of liberation, the remaking of the sense of the history of philosophy is based on a popular interpretation of the history of mankind, with the ancient geopolitical struggle between the “center” and the “periphery”. (The countries of Western Europe, North America, Russia and Japan are the “center”; those of Latin America, Arabia, Africa, India and Southeast Asia are the “periphery”). Accordingly, the history of philosophy appears as a struggle of the ideas between the “totality” and the “other”, between the “center” and “periphery”. Here geopolitical discrimination gains ethical and social dimensions, and its origins are in contact with Greek philosophy. There, Parmenides’: “being is” and “non-being is not” (where a social meaning is given to “non-being” and “non-being” is, in principle, identified with barbarism) already excludes distinction and difference. It also lays the basis for the “ontology of totality”. The subjectivity of modern philosophy is considered as a “logical culmination of the Cartesian *ego cogito*”. For Dussel, in this context, the Cartesian “I think” is a philosophical aspect of the *conquista* authority (“I win”), which was later realized in pantheism by Spinoza, in “the absolute idea” by Hegel, and in the “will to power” by Nietzsche<sup>22</sup>, etc. Classical and modern Western philosophy are interpreted as discourses separating the existence of the object from its subjectivity. This results in the

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<sup>21</sup> In this framework, the subject of knowledge is taken outside its specific historical characteristics and treated as universal reason; it claims to develop universal verity, irrespective of particular historico-cultural situations.

<sup>22</sup> See: Enrique Dussel, 1492: *El encubrimiento del Otro (Hacia el origen del “mito de la modernidad”)* (Madrid: Nueva Utopia, 1992).



disappearance of the “Other”: its exteriority is reduced to the pure interiority of the theoretical “I”.

The ideas of the French phenomenologist, E. Levinas, who influenced the formation of the concept of the “Other”, are taken as “tools” helping the inversion of the “theoretical I” to a “living I”. By Levinas the relation to the “Other” as a non-transcendental transcendentalism, as well as face-to-face standing are an initial cell of moral relations and ethical culture; the problem of the “Other” is central to his phenomenological ethics. However, Levinas’ prospect did not stipulate that the “Other” would be African, American Indian or Asian, who are the “Others” for the European and North American Totality. Thus Levinas’ thought still develops the Eurocentric vision, as seen by E. Dussel in particular. His thought was open to the exteriority of the “Other” and it presented the image and the “person” of the “Other”. The “phenomenology of the image” by Levinas is also considered insufficiently radical because, being limited to ethics, it does not take into account either the political context of its arguments or the importance of ethico-political practice.

The perception of M. Heidegger’s ideas is also ambiguous. The achievements of M. Heidegger, who began a “destruction” of Western ontology, which had been oriented to disclosing the sense of existence, are recognized. However his philosophizing does not overcome the “totality” of European thinking: the “Other” remains here in “oblivion”. In this context the philosophy of liberation with the variety of its concepts can be presented as an answer to one question: if the experience obtained by the “Other” exists, then what type of logos is able to express it and be shown in it. There is an attempt to form this logos as a new word in the history of philosophy.

Certainly, the philosophy of liberation contributes to re-evaluating the Eurocentrism in philosophical thought and tries to indicate new ways for a decentered development of modern philosophy. The need for a new understanding of the historico-philosophical process is realized by Latin American philosophers as a requirement for developing a model of intercultural philosophy<sup>23</sup>, within the framework of which the further development of a philosophy of many possible kinds of “centrism” – European, Asian, African or Latin American – would be possible. The emphasis on distinction is meant to be a step leading to the creation of a really “universal” philosophy. Its representatives propose philosophy of liberation as a basis for developing such a model – it will provide an opportunity to have a new understanding of the unity of world philosophy. The basis of this proposal is their conviction that philosophy of liberation successfully realizes its regional problematic, and, at the same time, its recognition of the universal character of philosophy is obvious in its representatives. With these conditions goes an understanding of the danger

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<sup>23</sup> See: Raul Fornet-Betancourt, *Hacia una filosofía intercultural latinoamericana* (San Jose, C.R.: DEI, 1994).

of isolationism, ethno-centrism, “provincialism” that results in an original re-interpretation of the concept of “universality”. Thus, the proposed review of questions directly concerning the Latin American reality – the person and his conditions – intends, at the same time, to open a “universal horizon”. According to the Mexican philosopher, L. Sea, the “abstract” universalism of European philosophy is opposed here by the “specific” universalism of Latin American philosophy<sup>24</sup>. Presentation of the “liberation” discourse as the position of poor and oppressed people, or, as the voices of the “Other”, is in many respects an opposition to European universalism that pretends to express the logos of an abstract universal “person in general”.

As regards the schools that approve the European “norm” of philosophizing and European concepts, is it possible to consider their current distribution on the continent: phenomenology, existentialism, structuralism, analytical philosophy, the ideas of the Frankfurt school, etc., as an extension of a spiritual dependence on Western philosophy? Or, can these trends be considered as a resource for modern philosophy, representing the “world” history of philosophy and feeding national philosophical cultures? All these philosophical trends (with one or another variation) are tied to a presentation of philosophy as an autonomous activity – not related to the ordinary life of a region; nor to its political, economic and cultural situation. The origins of such an understanding are in the nature of philosophizing as such, as well as in the theoretical orientation of its Greek perception. This orientation seeks to comprehend the ideal truth – the idea of truth in itself, pure, unconditional, universal and supranational. In this connection, it is appropriate to recall E. Husserl’s statements on this theme which can easily be labeled as Eurocentric, but also as having a deep internal logic. Husserl proposed distinguishing philosophy as an historic fact in time and philosophy in the sense of an idea<sup>25</sup>, a form of the spirit that is realized and displayed in its ideality and universality as it sets “infinite tasks”. From this point of view, any specific historical philosophy is “more or less [a] successful attempt to embody the guiding idea of infinity and even the universality of truth”<sup>26</sup>. Philosophical knowledge initially aspires to promote the “limiting bases” of any conscious attitude toward reality and applies this to the development of absolute or universal norms.

Hence, when considering the problem of defining the nature of philosophy outside the European tradition, the historical fact that philosophy was born as “love of wisdom” in that tradition cannot be ignored. One must also take into account the search for “ideal essence” as an unchanging norm for universal theoretical reflection. It is impossible to consider national philosophical traditions only as derivatives of certain

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<sup>24</sup> Leopoldo Zea, *Dependencia y liberación en la cultura latinoamericana* (Mexico, 1974), p. 89.

<sup>25</sup> See. Edmund Husserl, “The Crisis of European Mankind and Philosophy”, *The Problems of Philosophy* (1986, № 3), p. 111.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

cultures and civilizations. Most likely this question should be put the other way: given the actual development of historical and philosophical perception, is it possible to reach “authenticity” in the study of national and regional aspects – in this case, the “Latin American” aspect? Or, is reaching authenticity possible only when one is reflecting on the “eternal” subjects of classical and modern philosophy? If, at the basis of any original philosophy there is a search for the universal, then this process – according to traditional logic – should inevitably pass over the revelation of special, unique and specific components. This phase of comprehension in original philosophizing in different circumstances has a primary value in modern philosophy. And it is important for understanding not only the notorious “unity of historical and philosophical process”, but also the sense of philosophy itself.

On the way to overcoming this “Western” matter, Latin American “liberation” philosophers are trying to rethink this particular “break” in the modern idea. Despite the recognition of plurality in modern philosophical discourse – as a rule – the national and cultural forms of philosophizing are not emphasized. This is not due to a “malicious intent” that discriminates against “national and regional” matters. The problem is how far the original form of philosophizing and philosophical “nationalism” help to make clear the generally valid and universal problems of existence. It is conventional to state that the national form of philosophizing is inherent not in philosophy or philosophical thinking itself, but only in the philosophical culture of a given community. Real philosophy will never be isolated from a national context. Rather, it is always directed to the “universal” and to the formulation of problems of general validity. This tendency in the Latin American philosophical idea is obvious.

A new stage in the development of the philosophy of liberation is related to the continuing dialogue between the European and the North American idea – presented by K.O. Apel, C. Taylor, G. Vattimo, R. Rorty, etc.<sup>27</sup>. The problematic of this dialogue is connected with the ethical measurement of mutual “North–South” relations. This transatlantic dialogue had been devoted to the search for international relations between the industrialized countries and the developing countries. Five meetings were held: Freiburg (Germany, 1989); Mexico (Mexico, 1991); Maguncia (Spain, 1992); Sao Leopoldo (Brazil, 1993); Moscow, within the framework of the 19th international philosophical congress (1993); Eichstadt (Germany, 1995)<sup>28</sup>.

The purpose of the organization of the “South–South” dialogue was to make clear the interaction between Afro-Asian and Latin American philosophical ideas on ethical and social problems in the countries of the Third World. Here philosophy of liberation is considered as part of the

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<sup>27</sup> See: Enrique Dussel, *Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty y la filosofía de la liberación* (Mexico: Ed. Universidad de Guadalajara, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> See: The AFIL Boletín (1993, № 1; 1995, № 2).

world periphery philosophy, that is, the South, represented by Africa and Asia, along with Latin America and the minority of the so-called “centre”. But at the same time, there is an obvious aspiration to present philosophy of liberation not as a peripheral variant, but as a full discourse on the modern philosophical concept.

These processes probably show that polyphonic discourse is gradually becoming a feature of the modern historical and philosophical process. One thing is indisputable: participation in intercultural dialogue designates the beginning of a new stage in the relations between West-European and Latin American philosophy. First, the question concerns the experience of dialogue between “discourse ethics” (K.O. Apel, V. Kulman, A. Welmer, V. Hyosle etc.) and the “ethics of liberation”<sup>29</sup> as an integral part of the philosophy of liberation.

Free realization of bilateral communication is considered by philosophers of “liberation” as the fact of the “Other”. This is recognition not as an “object of research” nor as an “object of interest”, but, rather, recognition as an independent subject of thinking. Despite the divergences of positions, there is agreement that ethical discourse should be based on moral norms, which provide equality and respect for all of its participants.

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<sup>29</sup> See: Karl-Otto Apel, Enrique Dussel y Raul Fornet-Betancourt, *Fundamentos de la ética y filosofía de la liberación* (Siglo XXI, Mexico, 1992); Fornet-Betancourt R. *Ethik und Befreiung* (Aachen, 1990); *Diskursethik oder Befreiungsethik?* (Aachen, 1991); Enrique Dussel (compilador.) “Debate en torno a la ética del discurso de Apel”, *Dialogo filosofico Norte-Sur desde América Latina* ( Mexico: Ed. Siglo XXI–UAM–Iztapalapa, 1993).

## CHAPTER XVI

# ISLAM AS AN ISSUE IN CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

*NUR KIRABAEV*

Normally the term civilization applies to a country or continent, for instance, to Europe, China, India, etc. However, Muslim civilization is not related directly to any geographical location. Actually, it covers the whole continental and sub-continental world.<sup>1</sup>

There is a special kind of solidarity which is based not only on trust in Allah, but also on a common world view. However, this civilizational solidarity is not firm, nor is it free of conflicts. It does not exist in a pure form and is, above all, the result of cross-cultural interactions among different civilizations – probably an epiphenomenon. Islam is a unity in diversity. Its specific feature lies in its close integration with religion which represents a style of life, a system of values and social, political and economic institutions.

Islam might be one of the most viable world religions and it has been able to be dynamically adapted to the specific features of the traditions of different peoples. In the present modern world, the number of Muslims is increasing<sup>2</sup> – which is to say, that even today many are impressed by the appeal and simplicity of Islam.

### **THE IMAGE OF ISLAM IN THE NON-MUSLIM WORLD: CONDITIONS FOR DIALOGUE**

On the one hand, Muslim civilization has played a considerable role in world history and it still has vital influence on various spheres of life in many countries. On the other hand, “Islam” has brought the world numerous problems at different levels. These problems pertained to relations between states, to relations with other religions, and to international political and economics. After 1967 the term “Muslim factor” was often used in the mass media and in research literature; and after the

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim civilization combines peoples which belong to different ethnic groups, cultures, languages, and traditions – from Syria to Malaysia, from Tatarstan to the Republic of South Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Today there are more than one billion Muslims living in the world. More than 40 countries are members of “The Organization of Islamic Conference”. Also the Muslim Diaspora exists in many European countries (15 million) and in the USA (6 million).

Iranian revolution in 1979, Islam was considered a threat to the world order. In the 1980s, Islam was associated with extremism and terrorism. After the publication of Huntington's well-known book *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993) the whole Muslim civilization was considered as a potential source of conflicts in the modern world. This is spoken of as if it were a universal truth, but it is not correct if we recall that, for many centuries, Muslim and West European civilizations were neighbours in the Mediterranean culture.

In the non-Islamic world, knowledge about Islam is deficient and is often distorted. Up to the present, false cultural-philosophical and political-ideological stereotypes regarding Muslim civilization prevail in research as well as in public perception. The term "Islamic fundamentalism", widely used in the mass media, is a typical example. Its meaning is interpreted quite broadly and arbitrarily, and it is understood mostly as religious extremism without differentiating "Islamic fundamentalism" from "Islamic extremism".

There are even attempts to deny the humanistic character of Muslim culture. Abstract discourse on Islam and Islamic culture cannot be fair, if one does not bear in mind that Islam and Muslim culture were shaped differently during different historical periods and in different countries.

Particular attention should be given to a critical analysis of the methodology in the various approaches to Muslim society and its culture: European civilizational approach, Russian historiosophic and Marxist formational approaches.<sup>3</sup> They are similar because they employ a "missionary approach" that conceives the mission of the West or Russia in the Muslim East as civilizing, progressive and liberating.

Generally, stereotypes result from lack of knowledge or from unequal methodology – or, further, they are formed in accordance with the ideological and socio-cultural directives of the perceiving subject.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to provide a comprehensive analysis of the stereotypes prevalent in Western Islamic studies of Muslim culture.

Islam and Christianity are world religions with a universal world vision, each with its own understanding of the world. The proposed approach to searching for an East-West dialogue requires knowledge and understanding of the historical commonality between the West and the Muslim East. Both civilizations existed and developed together in the Mediterranean area. Not only the Abrahamic religious tradition, but also ancient cultures are integral parts of both civilizations. Aristotle has always been the First Teacher, even for the Middle East.

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<sup>3</sup> Yuriy Pochta, "The image of Islamic culture in European consciousness" in Nur Kirabaev and Yuriy Pochta (eds.), *Values in Islamic culture and the experience of history. Russian philosophical studies I* (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002), pp. 11-40.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York 1979); Yuriy Pochta, *The Origin of Islam and Muslim Society* (Moscow: Rudn, 1993 (in Russian)).

The main differences in their historical and cultural development can be found in the area of “secularism”. Classical Muslim culture has kept the balance between the religious and the secular. This balance determined the basic world view and the value principles; it was also at the basis of the Muslim understanding of universalism until the middle of the 15th century. Since the 16th century, the religious component has become dominant. But in the European tradition after the Renaissance, the secular component has played a dominant role in the European world view. That is why all attempts to return to the religious view concerning the social and cultural world order are considered to be a threat to modern Western civilization.

While there are certain religious principles at the basis of the Muslim world view, the European world view differs from this because of its “secularity”. Only if one recognizes this difference would a dialogue between these two universal world civilizations be possible. Recognition of cultural and religious pluralism is the other essential condition for this dialogue in order to search for, and to establish, cross-cultural interaction that integrates moral foundations.

Specific features of Muslim culture and civilization should not be seen in the context of opposition: “East”–“West”, old–new, past–present, originality–modernity, traditionalism–rationalism, heritage–innovation, religious–national, etc., but on the basis of their interrelation. In this context we have to ask how to compare or correlate classical Arabic-Muslim culture and modern Islamic culture in the philosophical dimension of value. The former is open to interaction with other cultures; the latter is not ready to open itself to modern inter-civilizational dialogue unless it is engaged in opposition. This problem is connected with the main problem of determining the essence of Muslim culture: What are its essential components which should be preserved even in the process of transition to industrial and post-industrial society in the Muslim East?

## **THE PARADIGM OF MUSLIM CIVILIZATION**

Muslim culture, which is an integral part of world culture, has played a crucial role in the history of human civilization and still exerts a huge influence on many aspects of life in various countries. For two reasons, studies on Muslim culture in Russia have had not only an academic, but also a social and political significance. Firstly, Russia borders directly on Muslim countries, and a certain part of the population of Russia has been historically exposed to Muslim culture. Secondly, the analysis of Russian historical, philosophic and cultural tradition shows that studying the attitude towards Islam and Muslim culture during the whole history of Russia is decisive for understanding the originality of Russia and

Russian culture as a whole. This is confirmed by the modern discussions around the problem of Eurasian doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

One of the important tasks of philosophical science is to study the integrity of world history not only from the perspective of “diversity in unity”, but also from the perspective of “unity in diversity”. That is to say, the task is to discover any common and coinciding features and characteristics in different civilizations, as well as to understand that each of them is an original form of the development of certain aspects of the human being as a cultural and historical creature.

The paradigm of Muslim civilization played a historical role which not only reveals, but also determines, a social and cultural unity with other civilizations. Thus the following question is to be raised: What has determined the world vision and the human being (in Heidegger’s sense)? The understanding of this “existential what” stipulates the historical and philosophic consideration of the cultural phenomena and the ideological images of that epoch.

Analysis of the values of Muslim culture entails the question of spiritual references, with which the representatives of Muslim civilization (both individuals and social groups) correlate their actions and style of life. The basic values of Muslim culture were determined by the formation and development of the Arab Caliphate. Specific features of the classical Muslim culture, as the paradigm of Muslim culture in general, are influenced considerably by the circumstances in which it was formed as an integral part of Mediterranean culture and civilization. It not only preserved and enriched ancient cultural, scientific and philosophic traditions, but it also developed the humanist character of Mediterranean culture. It is not surprising that in the Middle East the ancient heritage has been considered to be the source and an integral part of Muslim world culture.

The expansion of Islam and the Arab Caliphate promoted the development of Muslim civilization. Vast space became a new centre of cooperation and mutual enrichment for different cultural and religious traditions. In the “the Golden Age” of Muslim civilization (9th to 12th century), Muslim culture began to influence world culture decisively – on both the spiritual and the material level.

One of the important characteristics of classical Muslim culture is that its basic structural elements are not so much sciences (as in West European thought), but values and ideological streams which determine the epistemological character of cognition and its interpretation of the world. These streams entail evaluations and concepts concerning the basic grounds and nature of human life in this world and in space as reflected in the Islamic world view.

Medieval Muslim culture pursued an ideal of complex knowledge. The thinkers of the Muslim Middle Ages tried to resolve each problem (of

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Nur Kirabaev (ed.), *The Eurasian Idea and Modernity* (Moscow: Rudn, 2002 (in Russian)).



culture, policy, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy or law) separately, because no problem is limited by only one specific branch of knowledge. For instance, the work of the famous medieval thinker al-Ghāzālī (1058-1111), “Revival of the Religious Sciences”, can be considered to be philosophical, legal, religious, linguistic, and cultural at the same time, i.e. interdisciplinary in the modern sense. It was not without reason that the famous philosopher, Averroes (1126-1198), spoke of al-Ghāzālī as follows: al-Ghāzālī was a philosopher when he was with philosophers; he was Sufi when he was with Sufis; he was a *mutakallim* when he was with *mutakallims*.<sup>6</sup> Many representative scholars of *kalām* devoted their works not only to religious problems, but also to problems of philosophy and the natural sciences. Here, it is a question not of an undeveloped differentiation of sciences, but of the specific spiritual purpose of Muslim culture based on the famous statement of the Prophet Muhammad: “Look for knowledge even in remote China”.

In the medieval Arab-Muslim civilization, as is underlined by the American Orientalist F. Rosenthal in his work *Knowledge Triumphant*<sup>7</sup>, knowledge obtained a significance which could not be found in other civilizations. This “knowledge”, both secular and religious, has an important place in the system of values in the medieval Muslim society. This explains why in this society there were hundreds of thousands of educated people. The classical texts support this fact.

The system of values of the educated in the medieval Muslim society can be found in *adab* literature. The men, who personified cultured and educated man, were called *adibs*. *Adab*, as the collection of norms of erudition and good manners, stipulated knowledge in both temporal and religious sciences – in particular, in philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and a certain mode of behaviour.

There are attempts to understand Islam and Muslim culture in terms and categories of the Christian tradition. They look for orthodoxy, theology, Church ideology, etc. in Islam. But these categories simply do not exist in Muslim culture. According to these categories based on the Eurocentric research tradition, it has been claimed, for instance, that *kalām* is the orthodox and dominant theology in Muslim philosophy and culture.

In order to understand the paradigm of Muslim culture, the researcher should be freed from the ideas of Christianity which give the role of creating only to God, as well as from the Christian concepts of orthodoxy and heresy. In the Islamic world view, religious pluralism has a firm place. Two dominant criteria of Muslim culture are “Islam”, as well as “Hellenism”. In its history Muslim culture has revealed both its “Western

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<sup>6</sup> Ibn Rushd, “Discussion, Deciding on the Relation between Religion and Philosophy” in *Classics of Arab-Muslim Philosophy* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999 (in Russian)), pp. 619-647.

<sup>7</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978 (in Russian)).

appearance” (integrating some elements from Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism) and its “Eastern appearance”, deviating from the core of these components.

Each culture and civilization, in its flourishing epoch, worked out its own model of humanism. The humanistic character of Muslim culture lies in the efforts to make persons more human and to help them discover their uniqueness. There are three aspects of humanism in medieval Muslim culture:

1. religious humanism which proclaims the person as the highest of God’s creatures;
2. *adab* humanism, emerging in the 9th century, and corresponding to the ideal of *humanitas* which was typical for Europe in the 16th century, i.e. the ideal of developing physical, moral and intellectual abilities of a person in the name of the common good; and
3. philosophic humanism, briefly expressed by Abū-Hayyān al-Tawhīdī (d.1023) in the words: “a person became a problem for a person”.<sup>8</sup>

As history shows, the first form of humanism in Islam appeared during the rule of Hosrov Anushirvan, as described by Barzue, Paul the Persian, etc. Further we have the humanism developed under the influence of Hellenic Gnosticism, Eremitism and Neo-Platonism. These are humanistic searches concentrated on the problem of the “perfect person”, represented by Ibn’Arabī, al-Jīlī (1365-1417), al-Hallāj (857-922) and al-Suhrawardī (1154-1191). Finally, humanism is traced (detected) in the works of Muhammad ibn-Zakariyā al-Rāzī (850-925), who rejected the *afflatus* (inspiration) and claimed the autonomy of man’s intellect in the spirit of the European Enlightenment. His humanism focused on the prominence of the human intellect as in the *hadīths*, where the following words were attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: “Everyone experiencing God will experience himself”; “The first thing, created by God, is intellect”.

Specific features of the ideal of knowledge in Muslim culture were determined by the *Sharī’a* so that faith and intellect were not contradictory but complementary to each other in the field of the theory of knowledge. Theological and philosophical analysis of the debates concerning the correlation of intellect and faith shows that in spite of the different positions of different thinkers in Islam, they are similar in their pursuit of the esoteric tradition, which put the priority on the “mind”. They prepared the ground for Sufi esoteric knowledge and they tried to harmonize *Sharī’a* and *Tarīqa*. Sufism combined intellect and faith in a general system by correlating faith, way and truth (*Sharī’a-Tarīqa-Haqīqa*). The *Sharī’a-Tarīqa-Haqīqa*

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<sup>8</sup> Artur Sagadeyev, “Humanistic ideals of the Islamic Middle Ages”, in: Nur Kirabaev and Yuriy Pochta (eds.), *Values in Islamic Culture and the Experience of History. Russian Philosophical Studies I* (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002), pp. 165-198.

system arranged the “logical form” of action by way of a cognitive subject in search of its own absolute. This is promoted in a variety of versions, one of which was the theory of al-Ghazālī. In view of the fact that Sufism is an important historical reality, it is worthwhile studying its archetype.

As a rule, the attempts to adopt Western models in Islamic development failed because the traditional foundations, which constituted the spirit of Muslim culture, were mistaken for something which could be overcome historically. Muslim culture has constant and variable components. One must keep this in mind when discussing the problems of the reformation and modernization of Islam.

In the context of the discussion on the essence of the traditional and the modern, it is necessary to understand the foundations of the political and legal culture of Islam and its current ideological and cultural movements. According to an analysis of classical theories of state in Islamic political thought, presented by al-Māwardī (d.1058), al-Juwaynī (d.1085), al-Ghazālī, etc., the *Sharī'a* principles, which were to a greater extent based on historical precedents, do not prevent one from considering the historical realities of the Arab Caliphate.<sup>9</sup> The invariable component of these conceptions is the theory that the state alone applies the principles of the *Sharī'ah*. But one can ask: who possesses real political power, how are power and authority understood, and what are the consolidating components and moral-spiritual foundations of Muslim civil society? The idea of the unity of religion and the state is based not only on the feeling of religious solidarity, but also on the understanding that in Islam one is expected to establish equality and justice in the social, political and economic orders. Islam is a life style and a type of modern world view. This is key to understanding the essence of the idea of the Muslim state.

## **ISLAM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM OF SECULARISM**

In philosophy and political science “secularization” is now one of the essential problems, because the impact of religion is considerably reduced under the conditions of post-industrial society. This, however, does not apply to the situation in Islam. During the last decades, the influence of Islam in the countries of the Near and the Middle East has not decreased, but rather increased.

Secularism, in Arabic *'ilmāniyya* (from *'ilm* – science), or *'almāniyya* (from *'ālam* – world), can be expressed more precisely with the term *dunyāwiyya* – terrestrial, temporal or secular. “Secularism” was introduced to the Muslim world along with the concepts of modernity, modernization and Westernization during the colonial period.

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<sup>9</sup> Nur Kirabaev, “The Political and Legal culture of Medieval Islam” in Nur Kirabaev and Yuriy Pochta (eds.), *Values in Islamic Culture and the Experience of History. Russian Philosophical Studies I* (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002), pp. 135-164.

In the Muslim world Islamic movements emerged in the 20th century in response to “secularism”. “Secularization”, in turn, was seen as a process aimed at marginalizing Islam by implementing so-called social, economic and political development policies in the Middle Eastern countries during the colonial and the post-colonial periods. It was perceived as a rejection of the cultural traditions of Muslim society. Islamic movements called for a stance against those intellectual and political forms of the colonial order. In their view, “secularization” is directed against Islam and Muslims, is designed to Westernize Muslims and it will deprive them of their cultural identity.

The idea of “secularism” as a protest movement originated and developed in the history of Christian Europe. Its theory and practice emerged in the period of the Christian Reformation movements. The radical meaning of the term “secularism” is normally related to its French equivalent, *laïcisme*, which is considered as the theory of freedom of the whole society from religion. According to this theory the functions which were implemented by religious institutions should be given to secular people – in particular, the fields of education and jurisprudence. For instance, religious education was replaced by a discipline like general ethics in 1882 in French state schools. The founder of the Turkish Republic, K. Ataturk, understood radical secularism as a requirement for building the political institutions of the Republic.

The secularism of the 19th century quite often resulted in atheism during the process of its development. Starting in anti-religious schools it became a dynamic and drastic movement, and it brought about a new understanding of the place of the human being in the world. F. Nietzsche, S. Freud and K. Marx played a significant role in this process. Even though this atheistic and materialistic world view became quite influential, they could not destroy all the elements of religious heritage. In his article “The Calvinist manifesto for the epoch of globalization” (in the *New York Times*, March 13, 2005), F. Fukuyama urged an unconditional acknowledgement that religion and religious feelings had not disappeared from this world. Not only the Islamists’ militancy but also the Protestant evangelical movement are now growing and competing against each other. The fundamentalist movement has been carried on by the believers, convinced they were the source of “true” religiosity. This indicates that secularization and rationalism do not necessarily serve modernization.

In general, criticism against the adoption of “secularism” in Muslim society is based on the idea that this process in Western Europe was determined by the nature of Christianity. First, in Christianity the division of the spheres of the Church and the State is in accordance with the biblical principle to “render unto God the things that are God’s and render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” (Matt. 22:21). Furthermore, in Christianity the mediator between God and man is the institution of the clergy acting as God’s messengers and controlling the fundamental rights of religious communities. Thus, the Christian clergy was considered as a

major obstacle in the way to progress – a notion that justified limitations on the influence of the Church during secularization.<sup>10</sup> In the Muslim world, there is no institution with the functions of a Church. Similarly, there is no idea of a mediator between God and man. In Islam, with the exception of the Prophet Muhammad, no one has the right to speak on behalf of God.

In fact, up to the beginning of the 19th century the Middle East was not familiar with the idea: “render unto God the things that are God’s and render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”.

In the Middle East, discussions around secularism have moved mainly in two directions: one by Islamic authorities in religious knowledge, the other by Arabic Christians. According to the main thesis of the Muslim authorities, modernization and progress should originate from the achievements of Islamic civilization. As an example, they referred to the scientific achievements in the “Golden Age” of the Arab Caliphate. Thus R. al-Tahtāwī (1801-1873) was the first to assert that it was possible to borrow those elements of European civilization which are not contrary to the accepted *Sharī’a* values and principles. He tried to prove that democratic principles were quite compatible with the laws of Islam, because in Islam religious and legal pluralism existed in theory and practice.

Other Islamic reformers of the 19th century, H. al-Tūnisī (1810-1899), al-Afghānī (1838-1897), al-Kawākibī (1854-1902) and M. ‘Abdūh (1849-1905), thought that concepts comparable to European secular ideas of social development, like principles of justice, national welfare, government elections, the idea of perfect human beings in society, etc., could be found in the history of the Arab Caliphate.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī called people to follow the fundamentals of Islam. He criticized those who blindly copied European models, and blamed them for threatening the sovereignty of the *Umma*. He believed that the main reasons for the decline of Muslim civilization lay, first, in the absence of justice and *Shūrā* (council), second, in officials and bureaucracy who were not observing the Constitution. He particularly criticized despotism. Al-Tūnisī, in turn, explained the crisis of Muslim civilization by an absolute power which oppressed people and finally destroyed the civilization. Al-Kawākibī believed that Islam was not responsible for oppressive rule. The well-known reformer M. ‘Abdūh was a supporter of the parliamentary system and advocated pluralism. He equated the terms *Shūrā* with democracy and *ijmā’* with consensus, considering that the authority of the ruler and the judge can be viewed civil terms.

A Christian orientation prevails in the group of Christian Arabs, who were educated in the Syrian Protestant College and later settled in Egypt. The most important persons among Christian Arabs who took part in discussing the problems of secularism were Shiblī Shumayyil (1850-1917),

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<sup>10</sup> Azzam Tamimi, John L. Esposito (eds.), *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (New York: University Press, 2000).

Farah Antūn (1874-1922), George Zaydān (1861-1914), Ya'qūb Suruf (1852-1917), Salāma Mūsā (1887-1958) and Nicolas Haddād (1878-1954).

On the whole, they directed their attention to the liberal ideas of France and England in the 18th-19th century and thought that the intellect should determine the main principles of human behaviour. Among religious traditions, only those which complied with the process of modernization were acceptable. F. Antūn, like S. Shumayyil, understood their task in the foundation of a secular state where Christians and Muslims could have complete equality. They thought that the development of science and technology was the basis for tolerance that would allow the displacement of religious fanaticism. S. Mūsā underlined the need to divide the spheres of religion and science, considering that society will not go the way of progress as long as the role of religion is not limited. Without distinct differences between secularization and modernization, they considered Westernization to be the only means of modernization.

The followers of Arab secularism were criticized by those of the opinion that modernization and Islam were incompatible. They advocated the thesis that secularism was a declaration of war against Islam and its values and principles. They asserted that Islam aimed at the liberation of humankind by establishing justice and equality, and that Islam in its nature guaranteed freedom of thought and conscience. Many modern Islamic thinkers, like the Muslim reformers of the 19th century, hold the opinion that the scientific and technical achievements of modern Western civilization, limited to the realm of knowledge and practice, can be studied by Muslims without negative impact on their religious and national identity.

## ISLAM IN THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION

Islam is more than a religion. Even in a country where Islam is not a state religion it has great influence on political and social institutions, as well as on the lifestyle of those who consider themselves part of Muslim society. Muslim values and the institutions of Islam are the basis of their solidarity. The viability of this civilization is explained by the flexibility, dynamics and plasticity of the various means of reaching internal agreement. Islam is endowed with an ability to accept even the most radical innovations. The acceptance of one or the other kind of innovation, of course, depends on whether it would support and reinforce the vitality of Muslim civilization.

Muslim civilization has a long historical memory which allows Muslims to consider themselves able to dialogue with other civilizations and to be open for interaction with other civilizations.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Nur Kirabaev, Yuriy Pochta (eds.), *Values in Islamic Culture and the Experience of History. Russian Philosophical Studies I* (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002).

In the 20th century, particularly in its second half, Muslims encountered serious humiliation. The development of Western civilization seemed to be far advanced. Moreover, the West had intruded upon all aspects of Muslim life and it drew painful reactions.<sup>12</sup> And where Muslim modernizers or reformers tried to combine the achievements of Western science and technology with the basic values and institutions of Islam, the results were quite depressing.

History is witness to the fact that no Western model has been successful in any country of Muslim civilization. There are numerous efforts in search of Islam's own way of development. In turn, this gives rise to a particular anxiety in Western countries. Now the agenda is not only to overcome the imbalance between the Muslim and Western worlds, but also to find the ways for their possible harmonious interaction. With all that, it seems important for these civilizations to understand and listen to each other, and not to see in each other only what they want to see.

Islam should not be reduced to religious dogma only. Islam is a solid system which regulates life style, behaviour and the system of moral values, intentions and perceptions. As a consequence, Muslim thinkers are very sensitive to the modern process of globalization which they equate with a new stage of Westernization of Muslim countries.

In the modern epoch of globalization humankind has reached the point of inevitable interaction in all spheres of life, encompassing economic, political, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. As a process that integrates different components of humankind, globalization opposes diversification and it engenders a qualitatively new understanding of the concept of humankind, i.e. as being human in the global community.<sup>13</sup> Analysis of the vast literature dealing with the problem of globalization shows that there are dichotomous views on globalization: on the one hand, globalization is inevitable and fatally predetermined; it erases all differences and makes all to be the same and it affects all levels of life from the economic to the cultural level. It is the same as Westernization or Americanization and it removes the concept of the sovereign state with no alternatives. On the other hand, it is not inevitable, but is rather reversible; and it has an alternative in the form of religious and national identities opposed to Westernization and Americanization. Economically it intensifies the inequality among rich and poor countries and legalizes the dominance of global corporative capitalism. This is not an overall analysis of the ambiguous concept of the process of globalization – it is only a review of its tendency to create a single world civilization and culture.

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<sup>12</sup> Bernard Lewis, "Islam: What was wrong?" in *Russia in global politics*, (Vol.1, No. 1 (2003)), pp. 94-100.

<sup>13</sup> Oliva Blanchette, Tomonobu Imamich, George F. McLean (eds.), *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization* (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001), Vol. 1-2.

Globalization was directly connected to achievements in the sciences and technology as well as to the change of dominant social structures. Each of the outstanding technical achievements (from the steam engine to modern information technologies) opened a new page in the history of globalization. The continuous modernization of the West and changing social structures made it possible for the West to expand its influence over the rest of the world. Among the 188 member countries of the UN only 36 represent the European continent; 125 countries experienced colonial rule by Western countries. In contrast, the conservative social structure of the Muslim East since the 17th century had no potential for modernization, but put obstacles in the way of an active expansion of the West.

The globalization process was directed from the “centre” to the “periphery”. Consequently, the term “globalization” includes the concept of “Westernization”. Globalization in its historical development up to the present has been the process of establishing Western domination over the world (USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are considered “offshoots of the West”).

In investigating the influence of the globalization process on the development of Third World countries, including those that are Muslim, one must take, at least, two points into consideration. First, the spiritual and value basis of social life in the countries of the Middle East is quite firmly related with their social environment. (The main goal of culture is to be a means of expressing human universality in a social form.) Second, the outstanding achievements of the Muslim culture are, nonetheless, not directly determined by social conditions. The initial foundations of the Muslim community are religion and the religious understanding of the human being, even though it seems to be contrary to the well-known axiom: Islam is the “religion of community”.

It is difficult today to characterize the influence of globalization on the development of Muslim civilization, because the Muslim world is very heterogeneous. Islam is dispersed in various spheres of the real and spiritual life of peoples, who consider themselves to be part of Muslim civilization. This problem requires careful and serious studies.

## **ISLAM AND INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUE**

For almost six centuries (7th to 13th century) Muslim civilization was an example of openness towards dialogue with other cultures and civilizations. Not least, this openness was promoted by the spirit of religious and cultural tolerance in the oecumene of the Arab Caliphate from the Indus to Gibraltar. Persian wisdom and Greek intellect became important components of the spirituality of Muslim culture. Under political, legal and religious pluralism in the framework of Islam, not only Arabs but also other peoples were creators of the classical culture of the Arab-Muslim Middle Ages. And in spite of various conflicts and wars between the Arab-



Muslim world and medieval Europe, Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and Cordoba became the centres of culture and they determined the mode of interaction between civilizations. This openness for dialogue urged medieval Europe to consider not only the ancient heritage that was preserved and handed on by Arabs but also many other achievements of classical Arab-Muslim philosophy, science and culture as an integral part of its own culture. Independent cultures belonging to Muslim and European civilizations at the same time emerged and developed in the course of inter-civilizational action.

The openness for dialogue and the productivity of interaction between Muslim and European cultures were determined by the fact that both had been formed and developed in the area of the Mediterranean civilization on the common basis of ancient culture and the Abrahamic tradition. The consolidating basis of the medieval Muslim world, consisting of, at least, three Caliphates: Baghdad, Fātimid and Cordoba, and many other emirates, were tolerance and pluralism. Arab-Muslim culture gave birth to the great Ibn Rushd (Averroes), whose main ideas determined the development of medieval Europe in the “dual truth” doctrine by the Latin Averroists. But, unfortunately, Muslim culture itself never experienced Averroism.

The 15th century became a turning point in the history of the Muslim world, which faced the civilizational alternative. After the conquest of Byzantium in 1453 and along with the development of the Ottoman Empire, the consolidating basis of the Muslim world was no longer the principles of tolerance, pluralism and openness towards dialogue with other civilizations. The basis was then a strict conservative religious dominance. This led not to dialogue, but to confrontation between the Ottoman Caliphate and European civilization.

There was a tendency for the Muslim world to see and hear Europe in the way it wanted. Many achievements of European civilization from the 15th to 19th century were considered to be threatening and destructive to the spiritual culture of the Muslim world. This principal intention not to open oneself for dialogue led to the development of radical social and political movements. The classical Arab-Muslim culture experienced its development to a certain extent, but just on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. Not Cairo, not Damascus, not Baghdad, but Istanbul became the embodiment of the Muslim world. And the whole history of the Ottoman Caliphate was the declining history of classical Muslim culture and, at the same time, the history of the Muslim periphery’s struggle for independence. The Ottoman culture could not become the consolidating basis for all and create one Muslim civilization. The Turkish Caliphate had never seen and never accepted the achievements of European science, culture and philosophy, nor understood the historical transition to the industrial stage of development.

At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century new ideas emerged on the periphery of the Ottoman Caliphate,

particularly in Egypt. The time for a new civilizational choice had come. The theories of al-Afghānī, M. 'Abdūh and R. Rashīd on nationalism and modernism in many respects contributed to the crisis and collapse of the Ottoman Empire. A ruse of the mind in history played its next trick: the ideas of nationalism, which originated from its periphery, were declared by Atatürk, who announced the secular Turkish state in 1921 at the centre of this Empire. The Ottoman Empire could not – and already did not want to – be the consolidating basis for the Muslim world, but later it destroyed it. It pronounced itself to be an integral part of Europe and accepted the West with all its “roses and spines”. The civilizational choice in the conditions of the beginning of the 20th century resulted in the establishment of 22 independent Arab states, as well as Palestine, which struggled and gained its independence during the first half of the 20th century.

Today an alternative civilization is determined by at least three interrelated problems: a) Islam as a civilizational ground; b) nationalism as a component of state culture; and c) modernism. These must be integrated in order to allow the united Muslim world to be open to dialogue with other civilizations as it had been open in the past. It will also create endogenous conditions to qualify the Muslim world to meet the challenges of globalization.

The process of building a nation-state identity in Muslim countries is still going on. It is being affected by radical religious, social and political changes, which generally do not allow one to speak about the readiness of the Muslim world for dialogue with other cultures and civilizations. Nevertheless, there has been a breakthrough on the part of some Arab countries.

Islam involves the cultures of many peoples with no common historical background. Therefore, East-West dialogue for Islam should also cover cross-cultural interaction within Muslim civilization. The theory, practice and policy of multiculturalism can be the basis for dialogue as a middle way to create free civilizational space, without destroying the traditional existence of ethnic groups formed by the history of local civilizations. In order to realize interaction among cultures it is necessary, first of all, to resolve the problem of boundaries, secondly, to mark out the field within which the search for harmony is possible, and thirdly to develop a discourse of harmony.

Current globalization theory presupposes a linear-progressive understanding of world development. Viewing history from the perspective of multiculturalism, necessitates certain corrections and changes of this notion. The originality of Muslim civilization and that of the various cultures within Muslim civilization make it possible to consider world development not only as linear-progressive, but also as oscillating and spiral. Even the concept of historical asynchronism must have its place.

## CHAPTER XVII

# OSWALD SPENGLER'S POLITICAL GROUNDS FOR MYSTIFICATION OF ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

YURIY POCHTA

At the beginning of the 20th century serious shocks in the life of European society attracted the attention of scientists and those working on culture and the problem of its destiny. “The extremely tragic character of the modern epoch – as the Russian philosopher S.L. Frank wrote in 1923 – unprecedented evil and blindness, as well as instability of all general norms and vital principles make such incredible heavy demands upon the human soul that often it is unable to handle them. All old or, rather, recent norms and forms of life are collapsing; life ruthlessly sweeps them aside, exposing if not their falseness, then their relativity. ... The secret meaning of these dangerous and disastrous wanderings, as well as the way out I see as a religious crisis, in which all the idols of the vague and superficial old humanism will perish, and in the depths of the spirit an ability to apprehend again the revelations of the eternal and true life matures”.<sup>1</sup>

Public confidence in the theory of social progress falls sharply. The inadequacy of the new historical reality of former ideas in regard to the stability of bourgeois society, based on the ideas of educational rationalism and positivistic naturalistic evolutionism, becomes evident. Under the influence of these tendencies, an evolution of world outlook of European philosophers of history took place. For example, as Russian orientalist E.B. Rashkovsky wrote in the twenties, during the development of the historical thinking of A. Toynbee, “The history-progress concept (in the bourgeois-rationalistic aspect of this category) was replaced in his consciousness by the concept of history as suffering, history as destiny, which came to prevail in his world view”.<sup>2</sup>

Understood as a crisis of human civilization in general, the idea of the crisis of Western bourgeois civilization has had a strong, even determining, influence on the views of social scientists. In this context the concept of antagonistic contradictions between culture and civilization further developed. In the 1920s-1930s there was enthusiasm for the philosophical and historical concepts of Oswald Spengler (1880-1936); the

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<sup>1</sup> Semion L. Frank, *Sochinenia* (Works) (Moscow: Pravda, 1990), pp. 114-115. (in Russian)

<sup>2</sup> Evgeniy B. Rashkovskiy, *Vostokovednaya problematika v kulturno-istoricheskoi kontseptsii A. Toinbi* (Oriental problems in the cultural-historical theory of A. Toynbee) (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), p. 93.

concept of social progress was denied, and so was the unity of the history of mankind. Instead, the idea of a plurality of independently existing civilizations was proposed. These concepts were stated in his most known work, *The Decline of the West* (2 vols, 1918, 1922). Later Spengler refused the cyclic theory, which expressed the historical pessimism and fatalism characteristic of epochs of social crises.

In world history, O. Spengler marks out eight completely developed cultures, including the Arabic. He perceives their existence as the unity of life in all its variety, each of them he considers an historico-cultural whole with such periods as 1) pre-cultural (primitive), 2) cultural (with civilization as the last stage of evolution), and 2) post-cultural (fella). During the cultural period there is a blossoming, rise and developing of the creative abilities of certain cultures. Civilization, for Spengler, is a late, descending stage of the cultural period, the period of the organic death of a culture.

Proceeding from the concept that the nations represent spiritual unities, Spengler advocates a clear social differentiation within certain nations. The bearers of "high culture" or spirituality are always the elite, and in the elite - in particular, the national elite – consciousness is gradually awakening in the process of a people's historical development. At the initial stage of cultural development, the bearer of spirituality is the aristocracy, and with the emergence of towns, it is the bourgeoisie. For primitive and fella peoples, there is no distinction between cultural elites and the population in general.

In Spengler's opinion, Arab culture (he also calls it magic or Aramean-Arabic) begins in the 1st century A.D. in the lands around the Tigris and the Nile, the Black Sea and Southern Arabia. For a long time it was hidden under the external forms of ancient culture. To the soul of the new Arabian culture the German thinker attributes such phenomena, as 1) almost the whole late-ancient art of the time of the Emperors; 2) almost all Oriental cults and religions of revelation (cults of Serapis, Isis, Balaam, Judaism, Manichaeism, gnosticism, early Christianity, Neoplatonism); 3) the architecture of the imperial forums in Rome and the Pantheon – as the first mosque in mankind's history; 4) the early Arab legal systems (Zoroastrian law in the Sasanids' empire, Jewish Talmudic law, Nestorian and Monophysite law). Having reached the stage of civilization, Spengler believes, ancient culture still continued to exist and, with its influence, deformed the natural development of the young Arab culture of the East for a long time. Spengler considers Paul, Plotin, Origen, Marcus Aurelius and Diocletian the representatives of these deformed forms of Arab culture.

Gradually, the Arab spirit created its own categories to explain the world, which were contained in algebra, alchemy, astrology, arabesque, in the magic world of fairy tales. But the initial point for Arab culture, as all other cultures, is its specific way of perceiving space. In this respect the soul of Arab culture occupies an intermediate position between the souls of Apollo and Faust. The first one is that of ancient culture, which selected a sensual separate body for its ideal type. The second one is the soul of

Western culture, the original symbol of which is boundless space. The feeling of limitation, isolation, the feeling of living in the world, similar to a cave, is inherent to the magic soul of Arab culture. Such a cavelike perception of space (as well as of time) is also expressed in a specifically Arabic type of orthodoxy and religious architecture.

Since the epoch of Christ, the Arab culture has been waking up and spreading over large territories of the ancient world, taking these territories into its possession. This cultural gain paved the way for the successful armed capture of this world in the 7th century. Spengler uses the given circumstance to explain the precipitacy, "with which the Arab culture, being released by Islam, rushed to all lands, which within centuries internally belonged to it. ... This liberation of magic mankind has nothing similar"<sup>3</sup>.

But who constitutes the magic mankind? Spengler proceeds from the position, that peoples are not the founders, but the product, of certain cultures. This means that Arab culture was not created by Arabs, but, on the contrary, Arab culture created Arabs. Since the magic culture originated in the first century, the "Arab people" represented its last great creation, i.e. the community, constituted by Islam. Earlier, within the frameworks of Arab culture, there were Persian, Jewish, Nestorian, Monophysitic and Byzantine-Christian communities – all formed in the same way by their religion<sup>4</sup>. Only in the seventh century did Islam bring to the magic culture a consciousness of unity. The Arab civilization, which reached its blossoming in the epoch of the crusades in the 11th-13th centuries, grew from Islam. "The soul of the magic culture – Spengler writes – has eventually found its true expression in Islam"<sup>5</sup>. Islam has brought the basic ideas of Arab culture to their complete development, such as: magic nation (the elect people without a house and borders), magic church (complying with the state), magic state (Caliphate) and magic sacred law. It would be a mistake, Spengler asserts, to identify the Arab nation with the Bedouin tribes from desert areas. The new nation has been created by mutual profession of a new religion and consequently its unity is not related to any racial or geographical factors. Migration is not characteristic of this nation, because its expansion is carried out through the absorption of major portions of such early magic nations, as Christians, Persians, Jews<sup>6</sup>.

The history of Islam can not be explained outside the context of the mutual history of a group of magic religions during the first five centuries of our era, which include the Persian religion, Judaism, Christianity and Mandeism. With this approach, Islam appears to be not an original religion, but an expression of the Puritan movement inside the whole group of early

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<sup>3</sup> Oswald Spengler, *Zakat Evropi* (The Decline of the West). V.1 (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923), p. 213.

<sup>4</sup> Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*. V. 2 (N.Y., 1976), p.170.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.304

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178.

magic religions – and also a continuation of the older religious tradition. Only from the formal side, from the point of view of external religious history, does Islam arise as a new religion. The internal history of the magic religions ended in the 6th century with the cessation of the development of Christian and Talmudic theologies, as well as the Zen dogmatics. Spengler believes that the Puritan movement for which the magic world had matured by the 7th century, should have been led by a Monophysite or Jew. But, by chance, this movement had been headed by Muhammad, inhabitant of Mecca – which was “a small island of ancient Arabic paganism in the centre of the world of Jews and Christians”<sup>7</sup>.

In the general picture of the occurrence of magic culture, Spengler, reflecting his own time, includes a number of economic and sociopolitical aspects. The meaning of his remarks in this respect comes to the following: finally, Islam has achieved a social revolution – transition from feudal absolutism (in the Sasanian empire, Byzantium, the Umayyad Caliphate) to the bourgeois society of the Abbāsīd Caliphate. Social revolution began among the mawali, who represented the petty bourgeoisie of the East, and was directed against the Arabs as a new feudal aristocracy. Revolutionary neophytes, more serious than the Arabs, apprehended the democratic, Jacobinic, puritanic and communist elements of Islamic ideology and tried to realize them. The new capital of the Caliphate, Baghdad, became a symbol of the fall of feudal Arabism and celebrated democracy as a class ideal for the urban bourgeoisie: “This is the first world town of a new civilization, which from 800 till 1050 became the place of events which brought Napoleonism to Caesarism, and the Caliphate to Sultanate”<sup>8</sup>.

After the crusades, developments in the world of Arabic culture ceased. Only the stony forms of the Arabian civilization are left. Its populations occupy extensive territories for many centuries – but already as a soulless human mass, the used up material of history. Islam of the modern East, Spengler states, is a deeply primitive fellah religion. But still he has to take into consideration the historical realities of his time and to overstep the limits of cyclic fatalism in interpreting the history of Muslim society. In contrast to Judaism, he stated, “Islam is grounded” in the modern world<sup>9</sup>.

After finishing the first volume of “The Decline of Europe” Spengler departed from the concept of cyclic fatalism. He had been pushed toward this by the hopes for a new stage in the life of Germany, linked with developing the national movement, the spiritual leader of which he considered himself to be since his work, *Prussianism and Socialism* (1919.). The Russian philosopher K. Svasyan writes, “Spengler by himself ... dated with it the beginning of the national movement in Weimar Germany. Anyway, the political engagement of Spengler begins with the

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.304.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.425.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.323.

obvious claims to the role of leader of the “conservative revolution”<sup>10</sup>. In the second volume of *The Decline of the West*, written after *Prussianism and Socialism*, Spengler introduced political views based on an extreme version of Social Darwinism. Spengler's political concept reflected, as noted by K. Svasyan, “in essence, all the common sides of the nationalist views of the time: along with ... Anglophobia, Pan-Germanism (most likely, a kind of Pan-Prussianism) and messianic hopes”<sup>11</sup>. In the book, *Prussianism and Socialism*, he began to deduce a spiritual polarity of the world, based on the contrast between the origins of German and English blood relationship, and expressing it by means of antinomies: the spirit of Vikings – the spirit of orders, English capitalism – German socialism, mercantilism – heroism. The destiny of Western mankind, according to Spengler, depends on the results of a struggle between the tradesman and the heroic origins of European culture.

In his later work, *Person and Engineering* (1931), he examines the linear version of man's evolution as a whole, from the perspective of Social Darwinism. In the evaluation of the Russian philosopher, G.M. Tavrizyan, he “acts here as the author of the most flat, mechanistic, eurocentrically oriented concept of “uni-linear development”<sup>12</sup>.

In the next book, *Years of Decision* (1933), Spengler interprets the decline of the West as a disaster, expressed in the disappearance of its integrity, its world wars, its destruction by revolutions and national movements, and the celebration of the idea of general equality over the traditional forms of political and religious life. He treats the defeat of Germany in World War I as a loss of the West to Asia, of the white race to colored races. The victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia he considers as a retaking of Russia by Asia, a transformation of Russia into an Asian outpost, hostile to Europe<sup>13</sup>.

However by this time in Germany there was a leader of the movement, who in full measure used and hypertrophied Spengler's ideas of the nation, the superiority of the Aryan race, his denial of democracy, his appeal to free primeval instincts and an apologia of war. The National Socialists could not agree with Spengler, who believed that they had perverted his ideas. Adolph Hitler was convinced, that he could in practice deny the pessimistic concept of Spengler: “I am not a follower of O.

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<sup>10</sup> Karen A. Svasyan, “Oswald Shpengler i ego rekvium po Zapadu” (Oswald Spengler and his requiem on the West), in: Oswald Spengler, *Zakat Evropi* (The Decline of the West). V.1 (Moscow: Misl, 1993), p.103.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.106.

<sup>12</sup> Gaiane M. Tavrizian, *O. Spengler, J. Heizinga: dve kontseptsii krizisa kulturi* (O.Spengler, J.Heizinga: two theories about the crisis of culture) (Moscow; Iskusstvo, 1989), p.104.

<sup>13</sup> Quotation from: Karen A. Swasyan, “Oswald Shpengler i ego rekvium po Zapadu” (Oswald Spengler and his requiem on the West...), p. 111.

Spengler! I do not believe in the decline of Europe. No, I think that my providential mission is to prevent it”<sup>14</sup>.

As shown above, the gradual “sliding” of Spengler down to politics was not by chance. The contradiction between the refined spirituality and rough practicality in his views finally had been solved in favour of the requirements of the “active life”. Originally *The Decline of the West* was planned by him in 1911 as a “sketch about some political phenomena of the present with resulting possible conclusions concerning the future”. He meant the attributes of the approaching world war. Later it became clear to him that it was impossible to explain “a political problem from politics itself” without attracting “all the great problems of life in full”, without disclosing the “secrets of history of the supreme human type as an organic unity, provided with a quite correct structure”<sup>15</sup>. Spengler called this (political) reason for writing the book “a bit accidental”. In our opinion, it is far from being so. Having made a start with the political problematic, after *The Decline of the West*, Spengler finally returned to it, from a presentiment of the world war he came to the idea of “struggling for the planet”. Behind the idea of the decline of Europe – or to be exact, of the Western world, including the USA – there was the author’s despair, caused by the decline of Germany in both a political and a spiritual sense. This decline was so painful especially because on a personal level it undermined the meaning of his existence. “Being a child, Spengler admits, I always had the idea that I was fated to become a kind of Messiah. To create a new religion of the Sun, a new world Empire, a kind of magic country, new Germany, new world view – that was 90 percent of the content of all my dreams”<sup>16</sup>.

Not stopping on the eclectic methodological basis of his philosophical and historical views (the influence of irrationalism, Nietzsche’s doctrines, Goethe’s idea of the first phenomena, ideas of natural scientific relativism, as well as in the philosophy of life, the world’s antinomy as nature, which “needs to be interpreted scientifically” and humankind as history, about which “it is necessary to write poems”), we shall underline the important anti-Christian aspect of the philosophical-historical views of Spengler. But he was not at all original in this aspect of his creativity; he only expressed one of the tendencies in German culture at the turn of centuries. “The German spirit ..., – as a prominent Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev writes about it – wants finally to bear an original German religion of Germanism, which comes into antagonism with Christianity. There is no spirit of Christ in this religion (...). This is a purely Aryan, anti-Semitic religion, the religion of smooth and tasteless monism, without mad antinomy, without Apocalypse. In this German religion there

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>15</sup> Oswald Spengler, *Zakat Evropi* (The Decline of the West). V.1 (Moscow: Misl, 1993), pp.183,184.

<sup>16</sup> Quotation from: Karen A. Swasyan, “Oswald Shpengler i ego rekviem po Zapadu” (Oswald Spengler and his requiem on the West...), p. 35.



is no repentance, no victim”<sup>17</sup>. Spengler can not deny, that religion is the essence of each culture or “national soul”, but at the same time he asserts, that irreligiousness is the essence of any civilization (as the decay of culture) and proves the irreligious character of the modern Western society. According to Spengler, *The Decline of the West* is a work about the crisis of the West as a Christian society, of the Christian world as a whole with its inherent spirituality. Spengler challenges the European tradition of philosophy of history, which obviously or implicitly originates from the Christian picture of world history. He goes much further in creating an anti-Christian picture of history than did his predecessors in the French Enlightenment (Diderot, Holbach, La Mettrie) and in Marxism. Probably, he can be compared with Edward Gibbons, who in the spirit of positivistic atheism in his work, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, cited, among the reasons for Rome’s downfall, the negative influence of Christianity, which in the author’s opinion, decomposed public spirit and patriotism. Spengler puts forward accusations against modern Christianity, and considers it to be at fault in the decline of the West. But obviously, it is not enough to put forward these accusations, because it is necessary to prove an insolvency of Christianity during the whole extent of its history.

The Muslim problematic is related to this most directly because Spengler uses it as a means to deny the Christian picture of the history of mankind. The imaginary, interpreted history of Islam, presented above, serves him for “washing out” Christianity, for denying its intrinsic unity (so he proves, that the magic Christianity, Christianity of the Fathers of Church, Christianity of the Crusades and Faustian Christianity of the German knights are, in their essence, different religions in the same dogmatic and cultic attire). He belittles Christianity, or, even denies its importance as a spiritual basis for European culture. It is possible to state, that Spengler overturns Hegel’s conclusions that European society is a result of the development of Christianity (fully embodied in Germany), and the history of Islam is an insignificant episode in the development of Christian mankind. For Spengler, Islam, or in the wider sense magic culture, takes on huge dimensions. And with this as background, Christianity could hardly be recognized. Spengler’s consistent refutation of Eurocentrism and his criticism of the “Ancient world – Middle Ages – Modernity” historical pattern essentially rejects the Christian philosophy of history based on the concept of Providentialism. Under the direct influence of magic culture – Spengler writes – a “still irresistible pattern of the world history, as a drama of mankind, which is being played out between the world creation and the

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<sup>17</sup> Nikolai A. Berdiaev, *Sudba Rossii* (The Destiny of Russia) (Moscow, 1990), p. 172.

Day of Judgment with the participation of God as the center point”, had been created<sup>18</sup>.

It is indicative that, probably under the influence of Heraclitus' concept of fire, interpreted as a “tragedy of the cosmos”, Spengler replaced the idea of Providence, with the idea of destiny. And he understood his explanation of history as an analysis of the “logic of destiny”, not subject to human will and mind. He constantly speaks, not about the Christian West, but about the Faustian West. The Christian world view, according to Spengler, in many respects is under the influence of Islam and the Arabian Gestalts. From these conservative positions, Spengler criticizes Western rationalism, considering it as the source of European capitalism, democracy, ideas of social revolution and global equality. The origins of this rationalism he sees in the inherent magic culture of the dualism of spirit and soul that had influenced European culture. The whole history of the European soul, he writes, is that of the struggle of “Christian-Arabic metaphysics, dualism of spirit and soul. ... This dissonance is the essence of the dispute over the priority of will or mind”<sup>19</sup>.

Spengler rejects the rationalism of European culture and joins Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on the dominance of will over intellect. He concludes that finally, after the centuries-long process of overcoming the magic (in many respects Semitic) cultural influence, the Faustian culture appears as a “culture of will”. In that, he especially emphasizes the inadmissibility of presuming a “universal” or “General Christian” character of the cult of will and the possibility of removing it from the “ethos of early Arab religions”. Developing this idea, Spengler speaks about morality as a spiritual interpretation of life itself. He believes that in the ethical origin of the West, all is reduced to a direction, to claims of authority, and to a remote intentional influence, which takes place in the context of the struggle for an ideal form of existence that is specific to the Faustian culture: “It is incorrect to relate Christianity in general and the moral imperative. The Faustian person has not been transformed by Christianity, but has transformed Christianity, and moreover not only into a new religion, but also in [the] sense of a new morality (...) The will to power found also in the sphere of the ethical, a passionate desire to turn one's own morality into universal truth, to impose it on humankind, to change, overcome, destroy any other morality – all of this is our native property”<sup>20</sup>.

According to Spengler a universal morality does not exist – there are as many moralities as there are cultures. Rejecting the ideals of the Christian ethics, Spengler affirms, that Faustian ethics represents the theory not of the Christian, slavish morality, but rather the ruling morality, which embodies the will to power over the destinies of other people.

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<sup>18</sup> Oswald Spengler, *Zakat Evropi* (The Decline of the West). V.1 (Moscow: Misl, 1993), p. 486.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 527-528.

For the Germany of the 1920s-1930s, these conclusions actually meant that under the cover of cultural speculations, there were attempts to justify resolving political problems with the help of concepts of racial and anthropological schools of positivistic thinking, which are close to the ideas of J.A. Gobineau. Spengler searches for theoretical ways to save Germany and, for this purpose, he is ready to sacrifice such values of European culture as rationalism and democracy, ideas of the unity of humankind, social progress, Christian Providentialism, Christianity itself and the conception of its inseparable link with the history of European society. According to Spengler, all that would be rejected by the symbols of Faustian culture that have reached, their full maturity in modern Germany: the will, blood, race, destiny and the moral criteria of paganism. The will, identical to the idea of infinite extension of space, means for him an aspiration to conquer global space and a claim to dominate the world. We noted above that the evolution of Spengler's creativity moves in a circle, because he begins and finishes with politics. Now it is possible to specify that, actually, he completes this circle with geopolitics not politics, while subordinating his philosophical-historical research to this task.



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# **THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY**

## **PURPOSE**

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

## **PROJECTS**

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues.* This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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