THE WEST AND THE EAST IN THE HISTORIOSOPHICAL CONTEXT OF CLASSIC EURASIANS

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to the ideology of Eurasianism, one of the most significant post-revolutionary movements of the Russians abroad: analysis of the key issue of the Russian history, in particular, interaction between the East and the West as well as Russia's place in the historiosophical context of classic Eurasians. It is noted that identity is a typical feature of Russian civilisation, which makes the thinkers of Eurasianism turn to the problems of its relationships with the representatives of different ethnic groups and countries of both Asia and Europe. It is stressed that Eurasians highlighted the specifics of geopolitical position of Russia, which has always existed at the junction of two worlds - the East and the West, and consequently insisted on the significance of the East in Russian history, since none of the European countries has ever been so economically, politically and spiritually tied to Asia and the East on the whole as Russia, "Eurasia". The conclusion is made that the attempt to contrast the East with the West was itself controversial. It is here that Eurasianism turned out to be most vulnerable. The attention is drawn to the fact that classic Eurasians concentrated on the study of the connection of ethnic and geopolitical factors mutually influencing cultural development of the whole Eurasian territory with geographical environment. It is noted that on the whole historiosophical concepts of Eurasianism were not very popular among their contemporaries, although they presented a new view on the historical process in Russia. Before Eurasians, Russian history had always been presented as a particular case of European history, at least as the one quite similar to it. Eurasians suggested their interpretation of the historical development of Russia capable, in their opinion, to explain the specific features and the originality of Russian political culture and statehood. Eurasians thought that one of the principle reasons of the distinctive character of Russian national development was the original geographical position of the country, its "place of development", which conditioned constant expanse and colonisation of new lands. This significant feature of Russia and its colonialist nature mainly predetermined the special role of the state willing to organise and "fix" this "scattering" territory. This role will later become traditional for Russia. But according to Eurasians, within the process of Russia's expanse to the East ("against the sun") it also inevitably led to the change of the nature of Russian people and predetermined the dominance of Eastern and Asian elements in its historical development.

Keywords: Eurasianism, the East, the West, Russia, Europe, Asia, concept, ideology, interaction, culture, integration.

INTRODUCTION

To understand the posed problem, it is highly significant to turn to the thought of the Eurasian G.V. Florovsky who said that "national-state body of Russia has islands and oases of both Europe and Asia" which exist not as "colonial adjuncts" but as "living parts of a single body" (Florovsky, 1999). The statement about the Russia's need to acquire "European" or "Western" identity was also wide-spread, especially among Russian intellectuals (Ahiezer et. al., 2008). At the same time the West had

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a different opinion. Let us quote the view of the famous French historian F. Braudel who, speaking about Russia, noted that "it had the only tendency to organise itself aside from Europe as an independent economy world with its own network of ties" (Braudel, 1992). Historical aspects in Eurasianism were studied by G.V. Vernadsky, M. Shakhmatov, P. Bitsilli, E. Khara-Davan, philosophical tendency was considered by philosopher and culture expert N.S. Trubetskoy and later by L.P. Karsavin; A.V. Kartashev and G.V. Florovsky (who left Eurasianism early and became one of the severest critics of this movement) studied philosophical and theological tendency; economic and geographical views were developed, first of all, by P.N. Savitsky while N.N. Alexeev developed the theory of Eurasian state. It should be noted that such division is quite relative because their talent and scope of knowledge allowed them to develop original ideas and approaches far beyond their field of specialisation. The concepts of Eurasianism appeared between the two world wars when Russian emigrants, who ended up in the West after the October Revolution, founded the movement which ideologically united the "shatters" of Russia in Prague, Sofia, Paris. Berlin, Belgrade, Brussels, Vienna, Rome and became known as "Eurasianism". For Eurasians the term "Eurasia" was the start of versatile (historical, geographical, ethnographic, cultural, economic) studies of the Eurasian unity (Vilenta, 1988). It should be noted that the term "Eurasia" was borrowed from A. Humboldt who used it to define the whole territory of the Old World including Europe and Asia. Geographer and historian P.N. Savitsky believed that Eurasia should stand for the middle part of the Old World, approximately from Neman to Chinese borders and Tibet mountain chains, which meant he equated Eurasia to Russia as it had been before October 1917 (Orlova, 1998). Later on, this term acquired another cultural and historical meaning of the middle part of the continent between China. Tibet mountain chains and "west peninsula" of Europe.

During the years of the First World War, Revolution and Civil War in Russia and in other countries and nations being formerly included in the Russian Empire Eurasians noticed the weakness of the old Russian traditions and fragility of principles which seemed eternal. N.S. Trubetskoy, ideologist of Russian Eurasianism wrote: "We witnessed the sudden collapse of what we called "Russian culture". Many of us were taken aback because it happened so quickly and easily, and many people pondered over the causes of this occurrence" (Trubetskoy, 1920). But after that there were contradictions which Eurasianism could not get out from. The attempt to contrast the East with the West was itself controversial. According to the critics of Eurasianism, this is where it happened to be so vulnerable and repeated "many Russian intellectual sins" in exaggerated way (Berdyaev, 1925).

Petr Nikolaevich Savitsky is considered to be the ideologist and the leader of the movement, he had formulated main definitions which later became the leading principles of Eurasian ideology. His position can be seen in his definition of Eurasianism: "Geographical integrity and distinctness of Russian-Eurasian

culture is connected to the term "Eurasian" which became firmly established in science receiving more precise meaning and stood for Europe and Asia as a single continent. Representing a special part of the world, a special continent, Eurasia is characterised as a typical isolated unit from the point of view of the climate and other geographical conditions" (Savitsky, 1997). Savitsky paid particular attention to the issues of culturological identification believing that "Russian culture is neither European nor Asian. It is really special and specific culture. It should be contrasted with the cultures of Europe and Asia as Eurasian culture. To realise we are Russians we should realise we are Eurasians". This was a necessary step to geopolitical identification. Since the end of the 19th century G.V. Vernadsky studied Eurasia as the territory of Russian historical process characterised by Russian historical place of development.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological foundation of the research is comparative historical analysis of the sources which allowed to detect similarities and differences in views and positions within the analysed problem of classic Eurasians.

We used historical method which includes the consideration of philosophical movements and opinions in the context of historical-philosophical and socio-political thought of Russia as well as the method of social determinism which brings the study in accordance with the trends of socio-historical and cultural development.

An important methodological principle of the research is the notion of mutual dependence of the objects and their direct and indirect influence on one another, which is reflected in the philosophical category of "interaction". This principle contributed to the deeper understanding of the Eurasians' notions of the certain kind of integrity (Eurasia) caused by reciprocal influence of the East and the West. The use of the logical method helped to reconstruct dissimilar views of the representatives of Eurasianism on a certain issue; the principles of system analysis of the social project of classic Eurasianism were also taken into account. Classic works of Eurasians were analysed, and the conclusions were made on the basis of the data acquired when studying the sources. The conclusion is made that historiosophical concept of Eurasianism can be considered as the foundation of historic productive effectiveness of interaction between the East and the West as the concept which implicitly also included the idea of cultural dialogueness which is topical nowadays.

RESULTS

According to the analysis of the situation established in 1920s, representatives of the Russian concept of Eurasianism witnessed the life-changing epoch, when the country almost collapsed and then was reconstructed again under the new name of the USSR. Eurasians were solving the task according to which they had to realise

and justify the historical integrity of the vast territories of the Soviet Union and insisted that the main idea of the historical integrity they stood for was organic connection of the East and the West, Europe and Asia – "Eurasia".

The leaders of the Eurasianism movement had negative attitude towards the West, and Eurasians offered plenty of arguments in support of their opinion, both traditional ones, connected with original historical conditions of Russia and already familiar to Russian historiosophy in its criticism of western forms of culture and politics, and the ones acquired from modern reality. They noted that it was necessary to take into account such typical Russian values as traditional society, paternalistic state, "sobor" (council) and "veche" (town's meeting) origins, equating communal traditions, etc.

Eurasians supported the traditional search of cultural and historical originality of Russia in the context of contrasting Russia with the West which had been established by Slavophiles. While Slavophiles basing on the Hegel's idea of historical and unhistorical nations tended to idealise Slavic and Russian old times, founders of Eurasianism thought the originality of Russian type of civilisation was the result of its eastern origins.

For the first time in Russian historiosophy the Russian-Eastern issue was extensively covered in the works of the greatest Eurasians. It should be noted that the name of the most important work of Eurasians is "The Way out to the East" where Eastern origins of Eurasian culture and statehood are justified. Many Eurasian researchers highlighted the role of the "Asian component" in the fates and fortunes of Russia.

With a foundation of the doctrine of classic Eurasians, it can be stated that there is a consistent pattern over the known course of history allowing to trace back the interaction between Eurasian nations: pulsative occasional alternation of geopolitical forms of organization of the Eurasian space performing as the alternation of unified statehood or a system of states. And the 21st century is not an exception.

The problem raised by classic Eurasians is still topical. Russia is a multinational country based on historical and cultural community of its nations which have absorbed both Western and Eastern elements over the course of its historical development.

DISCUSSION

First of all, it's worth to answer the following question: what is the West and what is the East? Both the East and the West can be very diverse. Berdyaev said that the more he became acquainted with the West, the more he was convinced that "there is no single Western culture, it was made up by Russian Slavophiles and Westernists to make the contrast more distinctive". The philosopher notes that even Greco-Latin Mediterranean civilisation which had always been contrasted with the East

was repeatedly affected by it. And from the times known Greece itself became "the East" as opposed to Roman "West" (Berdyaev, 1930). It often happened that this fact was not taken into account by those who had reduced notion of Europe, was inclined to equate everything "European" with "Western" and never considered the fact that Europe always had its own East, just like Asia has its own West.

As for isolated development of Russia, it usually means isolated development in the context of the church, and its turn to Eastern Christianity was an example of the country being more Asian rather than European. Having received Christianity from the Byzantine Empire, Russia was rejected by the united family of European nations. Others believe that this wide-spread myth is the least corresponding to historical reality and can easily be disproved in the view of religious and historic development of Russia, which since the times of Kievan Rus had subjectively considered itself an integrated constituent part of Europe and a part of the united Christian world and continued to fight for its title of the European state for many centuries. Even at that time G. Florovsky drew Eurasians' attention to this position. He wrote that geographically it is not that difficult to draw the western boundaries of Russia. But it is doubtful whether Russia and Europe can be divided spiritually and historically. And it is hardly necessary.

From the point of view of Eurasians, the basis and the essence of Russian culture should be found in the purity of the Orthodox faith next to which Catholicism and Protestantism were considered only as "various degrees of heretical deviations" (Karsavin, 1925). It had already included the principal controversy of Eurasian historiosophy which, eventually, led to "two faces" of Eurasianism and its spiritual failure, according to historian Bitsilli.

The establishment of Orthodoxy as the only true and veritable Christianity should have inevitable led Eurasians (and their opponents also noted that) to the establishment of the selectness of the Russian nation and rejection of European culture as such (not just as an "example" of any culture against which Eurasians rightfully protested). And then this fair protest against the losses of Westernism inevitably gave place to direct anti-Westernism and rejection of many timeless values of European culture. It was widely thought that Russia does not need Europe which had brought nothing but troubles: nihilism, Marxism, revolution. It should come back from Europe and turn to the East, which is spiritually closer to Russia than Europe. Eurasians believed that by leaving Europe, where Russia should not have been at all, Russia is coming back to itself and becoming what it should be once again. Thus Eurasians definitely deviated from the views of Slavophiles who, as they claimed, were their teachers. They were not only developing within Western culture and going to "fix" Russian orthodoxy according to Hegel but also highly appreciated this culture and knew "wonderful words to express Russian attitude to the West" (Berdyaev, 1925). In this context, the Revolution of 1917 was also

considered not as the collapse of Russia, but as the collapse of Europe in Russia. Bolshevism was not only called a "satanic and evil" idea and inevitable result of European culture, which Eurasians mentioned in their first statements, but also a wide-spread and truly popular grass roots movement, as a revolt of the people against "Roman and German yoke" and Europeanised intellectuals.

So, on the one hand, Eurasians rejected Bolshevism as a result of European vicious thought (together with Socialism as its "degenerative form"), while6 on the other hand6 they found a number of related motives and were willing to bless it just for the fact that it ensures "Russia's falling out of European reality", as Savitsky said (Savitsky, 1922). Kiesewetter noted that the only difference is that the Bolsheviks declared war on the European culture as bourgeois one while Europeans stood against Romano-Germanic culture (Kiesewetter, 1925).

N.S. Trubetskoy in his article "My i drugie" ("Us and others") published in the fourth issue of "Evraziysky Vremennik" noted: "Eurasians agree with the Bolsheviks on the rejection of different political forms as well as the whole culture which existed in Russia before the revolution and continues to exist in the countries of Romano-Germanic West and on the requirement to revise this culture (Trubetskoy, 1925).

Eurasians saw this as the main point and "truth" of the Bolshevik Revolution. Petersburg-like Russia was doomed. Bolshevism is the first real attempt to find Russia's own way of development. Bolsheviks saved (although achieving their own "antichrist" goals) Russian great-power state, preserved the unity of Eurasia doing a great service to their successors and were also the first to find the right attitude to the East. Soviet Russia declared itself the only true ally of Asian countries in their fight against the imperialism of the countries of "Latin" civilisation. This is the essential condition and the only way to preserve independence of Russia in the view of the frontal attack of European culture. Russia's future, as Trubetskoy wrote, is not in rebirth but in becoming the leader of the worldwide anti-European movement (Lux, 1993). As L. Lux noted, these statements of Eurasians bore surprising similarity to soviet geopolitical concept which considered Russia the central power resisting the capitalistic West. In both cases it was supposed that colonial nations "would think of Russia as similar to them, as non-European, oppressed and rising nation which does not want to have anything in common with exploitative Europe". However, there was a paradox: in fact, most non-Western countries still considered Russia a European imperial state. And it turned out, as Lux noted, that it was not that easy to break up with Europe as the Bolsheviks and some Eurasianism theorists thought. In his article "Turn to the East" Savitsky wrote: "Isn't Russia already "the East" itself? Are there any people in Russia whose blood is not mixed with Khazars or Polovtsians, Tatars or Bashkirs, Mordvinians or Chuvashes? Are there any Russians who completely avoid the eastern spirit and its mysticism, its love for contemplation and laziness? Russian common people show noticeable attraction to common people of "the East", and when an orthodox believer fraternizes with a nomad... Russia is truly an Orthodox-Muslim country". ".... Eurasian nation consists, first of all, of Russian people; other nations of Russia are mostly either European or Asian acquiring Eurasian features only within the "magnetic field" of Russia" (Kozhinov, 1997).

At the same time, certain attention was paid to the significance of originality, uniqueness and need to preserve each national culture, which is one of the key points of Eurasianism. As N. Trubetskoy wrote: "No rational nation in the world, especially the nation organised as a state, can willingly allow the "face" of their nation to be destroyed" (N. Trubetskoy. Evropa i chelovechestvo (15 January 2017) http://www.e-reading.org.ua/bookreader.php/137346/Trubeckoii - Evropa i Chelovechestvo.htm). However, one cannot deny the fact that cultures affect one another. N. Trubetskoy noted: "If people dealing with European culture will be free of prejudice making them see something higher and perfect in all the elements of this culture, then... it will not be necessary to eradicate their own culture and to consider themselves outdated representatives of the human kind. Trubetskoy's strong statement about the "equal value and incommensurability of the world cultures and nations" was slightly moderated in the works of P.N. Savitsky whose opinion is more flexible. He said: "We need our own ideology, and it will not matter whether technical appliances and empirical knowledge will be ours or theirs". Here we see that his point of view is similar to the one of N.Ya. Danilevsky. Eurasians present an idea which is really significant today: Russia, as the main part of Eurasia, contains European culture, but there is more to it than that. It is much bigger and diverse. because Europe did not have such great roots – such great number of Eurasian nations like Mongols, Turans, Finno-Ugrian, Arian and Iversk nations. This was the basis of the "new Russian ideology", which, in their opinion, was going to replace the communist one.

Eurasians paid great attention to such important components as the study of the connection between ethnic and geopolitical factors and geographical environment mutually affecting the development of certain culture. Eurasians (first P. Savitsky, then G. Vernadsky) called this interconnected integrity "place of development". G. Vernadsky wrote that "the place of development is a certain geographical environment influencing communities of people... Socio-historic environment and geographical environment fuse and affect each other". Vernadsky justifies the theory, which later became famous, but in Toynbee's interpretation of the law of "challenge" and "response". This is how he defines it: "Each nation has psychological and physical influence on ethnic and geographical environment. Creation of state and territory development depend on how strong this influence and its resistance are" (Toynbee, 2010). Culture is born in the complicated process of mutual influence of the nation and the territory it is developing.

As for Russia, its geographical integrity, absence of natural borders between its European and Asian parts and horizontal, flag-like position of its natural zones define the unity of the middle Eurasian world. "The history of the expanse of Russian state is to a great degree the history of Russian people adaptation to their place of development – Eurasia – and the adaptation of the whole Eurasia to economic and historical needs of Russian people... They have not only got used to their place of development but to a great degree created it themselves". Absence of natural borders on the territory of Eurasia is a natural reason why its inhabitants tend to unite its territories. The whole history of Eurasia is a series of attempts to create a single all-Eurasian state. Both the East and the West tried to do that.

In their collective work "Eurasianism" Eurasians called the steppe zone from the mouth of the Danube to the Pacific Ocean "the back bone of the Eurasian history". The most part of the territory is covered by Kazakh steppes and is mainly inhabited by Turkomen (Savitsky, 1993). "The Great Steppe" is a fundamental civilizational notion introduced scientifically by L.N. Gumilev due to which the society turned its attention to the problems of culture and civilisation, to the idea of diversity of human history and its non-linear cyclical turn and realised how narrowminded Europocentrism is. Gumilev also stated that there exists super-ethnic unity of nations on the Eurasian territory based on mutual complementarity, which is complementarity of cultures existing despite any differences in their everyday life and behaviour. Historical and biospheric preconditions formed general world view, common ideals in social life and special unity in spirituality. This implies the natural craving for political integration and formation of large state formations within the same natural limits of Eurasian territory. People tended to guard the trade routes through the steppe, so the economic factor was a uniting one. Caravan track from China to Khorezm (Turkestan) – and from there to the Lower Volga and Don, to the Caspian and Black Seas, along the Volga to north-west rivers of Russia and to the Baltic Sea - had always been of great importance. In the 6th century the desire to conquer and guard the great trade route from China to the Mediterranean Sea brought into being the state of "western Turkomen". In the 13th century this also motivated Genghis Khan to create the Mongol Empire. The guarding of Khorezm, the junction of Eurasian trade routes, formed the basis of the policy of another Eurasian emperor Timur at the turn of the 15th century. When Timur's empire collapsed, Russia got the political initiative. Eurasian history is the history of community of different nations on the basis of Eurasian place of development, their mutual attraction and repulsion and their joint and separate relationships with foreign (extra-Eurasian) nations and cultures (Vernadsky, 2005). "As a result, they thought it was useless to copy the norms of "liberal democracy", established in specific conditions of European place of development and effective only in the West, in Russia-Eurasia" (Meier et. al., 2014).

However, the opinion of Western scientists is still the same, which can be proved by the discourse of Arnold Toynbee who writes about the history of Russia as if it were the history of its conflicts with either West or East. In his work "The World and the West" he noted that "although Russians were, and some still are Christians, they never belonged to Western Christianity. Russia was converted to Christianity by Constantinople and not by Rome as England was; despite their common Christian roots, Oriental Orthodox Christianity and Western Church have always been strange, antipathetic and even hostile to each other... The estrangement began in the 13th century after the invasion of the Tatars in Russia. Tatar yoke did not last long as the Tatars were steppe nomads and could not take root in Russian forests and fields. As the result of Tatar voke Rus suffered damage not so much from the Tatars as from its western neighbours who did not fail to take advantage of its weakened state in order to annex western Russian lands in Belarus and Ukraine to the world of Western Church. Only in 1945 Russia managed to regain those vast territories which were taken away by western empires in the 13th and 14th centuries. ... Over the past centuries, the Western threats to Russia, which had become continuous since the 13th century, only increased with the development of technical revolution in the West..." (Toynbee, 1996). In his book "Diplomacy" American expert Henry Kissinger noted: "Russia has always stood apart from the Western world" (Kissinger, 1997).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that Eurasian idea is being reborn in critical life-changing moments for the country. Each time Eurasianism not only preserves its conceptual basis but also acquires new features according to the changes in the world. Being variable, Eurasian ideas had the following basic conceptual foundation in different periods: multi-linear approach to the estimation of historical process, rejection of single all-human civilisation and culture; perception of Eurasia as a special geographical, socio-historical and socio-cultural integrity; recognition of independent development based on national and cultural traditions, values and centuries-long experience of interaction between Eurasian nations as the only prospective way.

Eurasians put forward the concept of "Russia-Eurasia" as the fundamental idea explaining historical situation of Russia to be Eurasia, an integrated unity of many, but primarily Slavic and Turkic nations inhabiting its "steppes and forests". Due to the unity of geographical image of Eurasia and uniting economic factors in the history of political formations in Eurasia, Eurasian nations have always wanted to create a single state which would unite the whole Eurasia or a considerable part of it (Verandsky, 2005). Russia is a "transitional country, a mediator between two worlds, inseparably connected to Europe by culture, but attracted to Asia and vice versa by its specifics and influence" (Klyuchevsky, 1986).

Eurasians have always paid close attention to the influence of other nations, especially of Turan (mostly Turkic and Tatar) as they were sure it was impossible to understand the course of Russian history without it. According to them, the principle mistake of Russian Slavophile movement (corrected by K. Leontiev too late) was that in its constructs Russian national self-consciousness got inevitably blurred in Pan-Slavism, that "the Slavic issue seemed the only application point for Russian national policy" (Karsavin, 1928). Eurasians pointed out that it was high time to realise that the Russian nation had always been spatially and spiritually not only an ethnic subject, a great Russian nation, but something bigger and more diverse. Eurasians believed that the Asian and steppe elements were of significant importance in the formation of special ethnopsychological type: "We have the right to be proud of our Turan predecessors as much as Slavic ones, and we are grateful to both". Realising that one belongs not only to Arian but also to Turan psychological type is important for each Russian striving for personal and national self-consciousness (/http://www.kulichki.com/~gumilev/TNS/tns06.htm).

Thus, the attempt to overcome traditional East-West dichotomy solved by example of Russia where civilizational and cultural foundations are synthesised in the dialogue between the East and the West is typical for historiosophic concept of Eurasians. The place of development of Russia-Eurasia turned to both the East and the West led to the problem of dichotomy. Dual position reflected the duality of consciousness and historical reality. Russia shows in complexity and disharmony in contradictory national and historical reality. On the one hand, Russia-Eurasia has always altered Eastern and Western features in its own way creating original culture, on the other hand, it gave the world an example of attraction and repulsion of Eastern and Western influence in its huge territory.

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