

Ethnosociology Russian School Lev Gumilev

Hello, welcome to the second part of the lecture on the Russian School of Ethno-Sociology. The first lecture concentrated on the Russian Ethno-Sociologist Sergei Sharakogorov and this, the second part of the lecture, will concentrate on the Soviet-era sociologist and ethno-sociologist Lev Gumilyov. Professor Dugin.

Now we are going to speak about Lev Gumilyov, the famous Russian ethnologist and historian. First of all, this year, the year 2012, is the year after the birth of this famous historian. He has great influence on the Russian culture, on Russian science.

His books were published in the millions in our country. So he is universally known in Russia, but I think there is very little known in the West. And I think that the lack of knowledge of Lev Gumilyov is a problem, it is a loss for European and American ethnology, sociology, and history.

Because his ideas are very important to know, to be acquainted with, to form the real image or a real picture of Eurasian past. Because Gumilyov, as a historian, was concentrated on the nomad empires of the ancient Turks, Mongols, and other tribes and ethnic groups. So he is really extremely important as one of the most important authors that studied the ancient history of the Eurasian continent.

So, concerning ethno-sociological theories of Gumilyov, first of all, we need to point out that his teacher was Sharakogorov. And Gumilyov was inspired in his ethnological searches by Sharakogorov, and in some way he continued the work of Sharakogorov. Because Gumilyov was the son of two pre-revolutionary famous Russian poets, Nikolai Gumilyov and Anna Akhmatova.

He has received very good education, pre-Soviet education, and possessed a great culture of Russian noblesse, of Russian aristocracy. And he was never really Soviet. He was put in prison for the crimes, so-called crimes, committed by his mother, Anna Akhmatova.

But he was never really Soviet. So he followed the studies of different Russian researchers and scientists that were in immigration, and was acquainted with a great number of foreign authors in this scientific field. So, Gumilyov was a really free man in not-so-free society.

And that was a tragic destiny of him. So, he was influenced by Sharakogorov, but that was not permitted, that was not possible to cite the idea of Sharakogorov openly in his epoch. So, he developed the ideas of Sharakogorov, very rarely citing his name or never.

The same with Eurasianism, because Gumilyov was Eurasianist, one representative of Eurasian movement. But because Eurasianists were not Soviet, they were white

immigrants living in the West, so the direct citations of them also were prohibited. So, being Eurasianist and a continuator of the work of Sharakogorov, Gumilyov never had the opportunity to confess it openly, because without that he was persecuted by Soviet Marxist-Communist government.

So, it was very tragic, his destiny and his life. In the center of all the researches of Gumilyov was ethnos. Ethnos conceived more or less in the same term as Sharakogorov did.

So, for him, ethnos, for Gumilyov, ethnos was the basic kind of human society. So, he was inclined to consider all the social process as more or less linked to the ethnos. So, he interpreted the society in ethnic terms, developing the approach of Sharakogorov.

So, on this concept of all-encompassing ethnos, he constructed his theory of ethno-genesis. Ethno-genesis was the central theory of Lev Gumilyov. Here it is very important to define how Gumilyov understood ethnos.

For him, ethnos represented the simplest kind of society as well as more sophisticated and complex kind of society. In our course of ethno-sociology, we have different name for the same social and historical state of the society. So, in order to understand better the place of Gumilyov in the ethno-sociology, we should define differences in the terms.

So, for Gumilyov, ethnos was a cyclical phenomenon. So, ethnos is dynamic also. And starting from homeostasis, the Greek word for defining something always equal to itself, in the kind of repetition of the same, that fully coincides with our conception of ethnos in the ethno-sociology and Sharakogorov's concept.

But Gumilyov thought that also there is ethnic phenomenon when this kind of stability is overturned by some special moment that Gumilyov called passionarity. The passionarity or in Russian passionarnost, that was the word introduced by Gumilyov to name, to give a name to special phenomenon of the end of the social stability of ethnic existence. And as a reason of growth of the complexity of the society.

So, the point of the passionarity was considered by him as the growth of the particular types of humans. They were named by him as passionaries. And this type of human being were more than ethnic.

So, they weren't satisfied with the repetition of the same, of the homeostatic state of the ethnic society. And they began all kinds of exploits. Risky, dangerous exploits in order to make something new.

That was the end of the ethnos for us in the ethno-sociology. And that was the beginning of the people. Or laos in the Greek, as I have explained in the introductory lecture.

So, but Gumilyov, Lev Gumilyov, didn't make the same terminological difference

between complex society that we are calling people. And ethnic stable society that we are calling ethnos. And he spoke about different stages and phases of ethnogenesis.

So, the first stage of ethnogenesis, according to him, was homeostasis, that corresponds totally, fully with our idea of ethnos as such. And after that, after the flesh of the passionarity, that was the growth of complicity of the social structure and creation of historical units. States, empires, and social stratificated kind of society with greater complexity.

So, Gumilyov considered that after the flesh of the passionarity, the complexity begins to grow. And also, it is the stage of the growth of the culture, of the state, of the territory, of the civilization. Up to a certain point, when this passionarity and the quantity of the passionaries arrived to the highest point.

That was called by Gumilyov, the Akhmetic phase. From the Greek word Akhme, that is the highest point of something. So, the Akhmetic phase of the growth of the ethnos is a kind of full expansion of its potentiality.

And after that begins the decline of ethno-structure. The number of passionaries also declined. There came on the scene sub-passionaries, according to him, that lack a certain type of person, that lack real activity, real force, and real possibility to create something new.

But they used the passionaries in order to take from them. They forced and by that usurpation gained control over the masses. So, the kind of parasites living on the account of the passionaries.

So, sub-passionaries began to grow in the number in this stage of decline. They perverted the social and cultural system. They caused the confusion of the values.

And after the catastrophe of ethnos in the last stage, it falls anew in a kind of homeostasis. So, a kind of ethnic stage. Gumilev made a picture of different civilizations explained by this ethno-genetic cycle.

And according to him, this cycle lasts more or less 1,200 years for each civilization, if all the ethno-genetic processes are fully manifested, fully developed. In other cases, this development could be stopped by extrinsic factors, by something that proceeds from outer sources. So, it is more or less interesting that comparing Gumilev's theory of ethno-genesis with ethno-sociological taxonomy of ethnos and people, people as laos in Greek, we could say that Gumilev considers homeostasis exactly as we are describing ethnos or ethnic group.

As something where all efforts are given to the main goal to conserve the same and to struggle against new. Gumilev proposed a kind of equation. Passionarity is equal to instinct.

That is a formula for the ethnos or homeostasis for him. So, passionarity is equal to grant the survival of the same. The level of passionarity is exactly the same as needed to reproduce the same.

For Gumilev, it was the formula of homeostasis. In the phase of passionarity, the growth of passionarity, there in the society, ethnic system, for Gumilev, the passionarity is more their instinct. So, in the same human type, it is concerned with more force that is needed to grant the same, to reproduce.

And that is a point where is produced something new, something accumulated, something extra. So, extra product. And in all senses, in cultural sense, in economic sense, in material sense and in spiritual sense.

So, it is a kind of development of the religions, of the society and state structure. In the ethno-sociological taxonomy, to this stage corresponds the stage of people, or Laos, or traditional society, where we are dealing with more complexity, much more complexity than in the case of ethnic society. And that is a growth of the people.

The people are going to its ecstatic stage. After arriving to this point, begins decline, when there are other formulas that prevail. The formula that affirms that passionarity is lesser than required for conservation of the same.

So, there are sub-passionaries that enter the scene and begin to destroy the society created by passionaries. So, it is a third formula. And after destructive work of this type with particular form, vampiric, we could say, nature, they will be a new society, ethnic society, or a kind of homeostatic society.

And that, after some period, new passionaries, according to Gumilov, from different ethnic groups, create new people, a new historic entity, and all that begins anew. So, this kind of interpreting the history as cycles of ethno-genesis is the sense of the theory of Nikolai Gumilov. And he applied this concept to Russian history, to the history of Eurasian people, but also to the European, to ancient, to modern.

For Gumilov, there were different ethnic systems in Russian history, but in the present time, Russia lives just after the Akhmatik stage, the beginning of the decline. But this decline should last for him, normally, it will last for more or less 600 years. So, it is all about Gumilov, but also the last thing that we could say about him, that he proposed original taxonomy based on the type of ethnic systems.

For example, he considered the simplest form of social organization as consortium, after that, convictia, sub-ethnos, ethnos, and super-ethnos. So, for him, all these groups were linked to the ethnos and its dynamics, and should be considered in the construction of any ethnic system. Sub-ethnos, it is a part of ethnic group or tribe, ethnos is a main category, super-ethnos, for example, Gumilov considered to be Soviet people as super-

ethnos, or Roman people of Roman Empire, super-ethnos.

And consortium or convictia were lesser form of human association, that in some situation could produce, according to him, ethnos as such. Gumilov pondered on the reason of existence of the phenomenon of passionarity, because it was regarded by him as something totally different from the ethnic conditions of living. So, it is something transcendental, as a kind of unexplainable intrusion on something else, on something alien in the ethnic community.

And, in short, of reasonable and materialist, required by the epoch, explanations, Gumilov made appeal to the theory of Chezhevsky, Russian scientist, that tried to explain some social and historical events by different eclipses and flashes on the sun. So, it was materialistic way to express a kind of bewilderment, profound astonishment in front of some historical phenomenon. So, nothing could be regarded as sufficient reason for apparition of passionarity.

It seems that it comes from outside. But outside for materialist was the sky, or the stars, or the sun, or the moon. But I think that is the weakest point of Gumilov's theory concerning the links that exist between this flash of passionarity in the society, in the flash in the sun, or drastic changes in the natural ambience linked to these meteorological events.

But, nevertheless, I think that the fact that he attracted our attention to the phenomenon of passionarity and invited us to explore more in this sense, it is worth of appraisal. So, now I'm finishing short observation of the sources of Russian ethno-sociological, most important Russian ethno-sociological writers. And here the introductory part of the course on ethno-sociology is finished.

I will evoke more authors and theories in the second part of this course, when I will speak about different kinds of ethno-sociological understanding of the types of societies, transformations and other social changes. Okay, the first question that I have, you partially answered right at the end of your discussion, but I thought I'd revisit it simply because it is one of the burning concerns of Westerners, sociologists particularly, when they look at Lev Gumilov. They regard his work in history and much of his work in sociology as genius, I think rightly so.

But, at the same time, he, I think, is somewhat misunderstood in the context of his times. And I think there is a distinction made between that work, which is considered genius, and some of his more, shall we say, controversial ideas that veer off into what in the West would probably be called pseudoscience. Such as the linking of passionarity with solar energy and solar cycles, the linking of ethnicity with biology and race, and so on.

So, do you think that these ideas were merely developed to support his ideas in what

you call a materialist Soviet academic context, or do you draw some other distinction between these two sides of his work? Thank you for your question. First of all, I think that we should understand the ambience of the Soviet Union. And there were real pressure on the scientists by the official ideology.

So, we could not dismiss easily this factor. So, he was obliged not to mention some names, it was obvious. He, obviously, was Eurasianist, but he could confess that only at the end of his life.

So, he was obliged to use some language of materialist ambience. And that is one point. Another point is that some kind of his interpretation of ethnos and ethno-sociological processes could be challenged.

I don't think he should be accepted as something dogmatic. I think that he could find its very important place in the context of ethno-sociology. But, at the same time, we should not regard him as the last word in the discussion.

So, maybe he believed in some flashes as academician Chezhevsky, also that was Russian academician. So, kind of materialist mythology. But, maybe not.

Maybe he had other ideas. It is impossible now to know. At the same time, I think that one point we should insist on is that he never was a racist.

Never. He never used the word race and he never suggested that there are some ethnic groups that should be considered as superior to the other. He only affirmed always that the ethnic groups are different.

But, that is the very concept of ethnos. Because, to be different from one another, they group, we group, as Sumner has put it. So, it is a necessary aspect of the definition of ethnos.

So, I think it is a misunderstanding with Gumilov in the West. And now there are articles in the Western press, completely erroneous, because he wasn't such a person, the image of which we could find in the modern European press. So, Gumilov has very kind of caricature and without knowing his work.

For example, in Italy only one little book is translated. In French it seems that no one at all. But, he is author of more than 30 books of very different quality and very dedicated to the different subjects.

So, I suggest to study Gumilov first and after that judge it. Good. Five.

One more question and that's it. Mark. Okay.

I'll just bring us a little bit further back on the same line of questioning then. So, if we are to take the concept of passionarity and describe it or understand it today in the context

of all Gumilov's work and in the modern day as a somewhat un-understandable force of societal, speaking in the ethnic sense, of will and creativity that propels an ethnicity forward to greatness. And we describe this as contradictory to ethnicity as an inherently conservative force.

But, I then bring up the question of perhaps the great Russian, what we would call in these terms, passionarists. If we take a look at Tolstoy, if we take a look at Dostoyevsky, these are some of the ideas that we could certainly consider the great people of Russia. But most of these great people of the Russian ethnos or super ethnos have been considered conservative forces in their own society both at the time and in history.

So, is that a little bit of a contradiction? Not at all, I think. But ethnic conservatism is something completely different from cultural conservatism. Because with conservatism we are dealing with, in the case of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky, we are dealing with some highly sophisticated concept of complex society with a high level of complexity.

So, it is a kind of artificial conservatism and ethnic conservatism is different. But, at the same time, we could, and Gubanov also evoked that aspect, that he called that in the case of sane passionarity, there is a great deal of conservatism. Because this kind of passionarity insists on the greatness of the whole.

This insistence, it is conservation and expansion of the whole that plays part. And that is morbid passionarity that is destructive and that is a kind of illness. But, worst of all is sub-passionarity and the proliferation of the sub-passionaries in the Russian society was a dramatic reason of our catastrophic social processes.

So, I think that the passionaries, conservative or progressive, could be positive for the case of the whole society. And the sub-passionaries, they always are morbid and they bear with them the destruction and decadence. I think, honestly, that European society or American society is not so much today ruled by passionaries, but mostly by sub-passionaries.

Maybe the United States is a little bit different, because there is a great deal of passionaries there, but they are, as long as I know, misorientated passionaries. Only in the realm of economic power and egotism, but they are half-ruled by the sub-passionaries, maybe degrading passionaries. But I think that the greatness for passionaries, as Gumilov explained, is the main reason of life.

The greatness for the ethnic group is the conservation of the same. Now, two different goals, two different orientations, and this passion for the greatness I consider very important for any kind of the same society.