Petr Savitsky – “Eurasianism” (1925)

August 9, 2019

Author: Petr Savitsky

Translator: Jafe Arnold

First published in the journal Evraziiskii vremennik [The Eurasian Chronicle] in 1925, abridged version re-published in and translated from: Alexander Dugin (ed.) et al., Osnovy Evraziistva [The Foundations of Eurasianism] (Moscow: Arktogeia, 2002).

\*\*\*

I.

The Eurasianists are representatives of a new element in thinking and life; they are a group of figures actively working to radically transform hitherto predominant worldviews and life-systems, and to do so on the basis of a new approach to the root questions that define life, an approach which has arisen out of everything that has been endured over the past decade. At the same time, the Eurasianists have proposed a new geographical and historical understanding of Russia, as well as that whole world which they call Russian or “Eurasian.”

The Eurasianists’ name is of geographical provenance. The point is that they, the Eurasianists, have – where previous geography has counted two continents, “Europe” and “Asia” – discerned a third, middle continent on the mainland of the Old World, that of “Eurasia”, from which they derive their name…

In the opinion of the Eurasianists, the notion of “Europe” as a totality of Western and Eastern Europe is, in a purely geographical sense, inane and farcical. In the West, in terms of geographical outlines, one finds the richest development of coasts, the thinning of the continent into a peninsula, an island; whereas in the East there is a solid, continental mass whose only disconnect is to be found towards the sea coasts. Orographically, the West is constituted by a most complex arrangement of mountains, hills, and lowlands; whereas the East is home to the enormous plains whose outskirts alone are edged by mountains. Climatically, the West is of a seaside climate with a relatively small difference between winter and summer. In the East, this difference is sharply pronounced with hot summers, harsh winters, and so on and so forth. It could be rightfully said that the Eastern European, or as the Eurasianists call it, the “White Sea-Caucasian” plain is in its geographical nature much closer to the West-Siberian and Turkestan plains lying to the East than it is to Western Europe. These three plains, together with the elevations separating them from one another (the Ural Mountains and the so-called “Aralo-Irtysh” watershed) and bordering them from the East, South-East, and South (the mountains of the Russian Far East, Eastern Siberia, Central Asia, Persia, the Caucasus, Asia Minor), represent a special world, one which is united in and of itself and geographically distinct from the countries lying both to the West, East, and South of it. If you apply the name “Europe” to the first and the name “Asia” to the second, then the world just named, as the middling and mediating world, will bear the name “Eurasia.”

The necessity of distinguishing on the mainland mass of the Old World not two, as hitherto done, but three continents is not some mere “discovery” by the Eurasianists. Rather, this discernment also arose out of views previously expressed by geographers, especially Russians (for example, Prof. V.I. Lamansky in his work of 1892). The Eurasianists sharpened this formula and once again gave to this “seen” continent the name that was once attached to the whole landmass of the Old World, to both old “Europe” and “Asia” in their totality.

Russia occupies the main space of the land of Eurasia. The conclusion that Russia’s lands are not split by two continents, but rather together constitute a certain third, independent continent, is not only of geographical significance. Insofar as we also ascribe to the notions of “Europe” and “Asia” some kind of culturo-historical content, and as we think of “European” and “Asian” or “Asiatic” cultural circles as something concrete, then the designation of “Eurasia” also acquires the meaning of a compressed culturo-historical character.[1] This designation indicates that Russia’s cultural being, in its internally comparable proportions, has come to include elements from the most diverse variety of cultures. The alternating influences of the South, the East, and the West, have consistently prevailed in the world of Russian culture. The South manifested itself in these processes mainly in the paradigm of Byzantine culture, whose influence on Russia was long and fundamental. The special intensity of this influence can be seen in the era from approximately the 10th to the 13th centuries AD. The East, in turn, acted mainly in the form of “steppic” civilization, which is conventionally considered to be characteristically “Asian” (“Asiatic” in the above sense). The example of Mongol-Tatar statehood (Genghis Khan and his successors), which managed to master and govern an enormous portion of the Old World for a definite historical period, undoubtedly played a positive role in the creation of Great Russian statehood. The lifestyle of the steppes of the East also exerted broad influence on Russia. This influence was particularly strong from the 13th to the 15th centuries. Starting with the end of the latter century, the influence of European culture prospered and reached its height by the 18th century. Among the categories which, while not always precise, nevertheless highlight the real essence of the division of the Old World’s cultures into “European” and “Asiatic-Asian”, Russian culture belongs to neither one nor the other. Russian culture combines elements of both and converges them towards a certain unity. Therefore, from the point of view of specifying distinctions between cultures, the qualification that Russian culture is “Eurasian” expresses the essence of the phenomenon more than any other…Of all the cultures of the past, two of the greatest and most versatile cultures known to us were genuinely “Eurasian”: (1) Hellenistic culture, which combined elements of the Hellenic “West” and ancient “East”, and its continuation, (2) Byzantine culture in the broader Eastern Mediterranean cultural world of late antiquity and the middle ages (these prosperous realms both lie exactly South of the main historical core of the Russian regions). The historical connection between Russian and Byzantine culture is highly noteworthy. The third great “Eurasian” culture was to a certain extent born out of the historical succession of the two preceding ones.

The “Eurasian”, Russian cultural environment, in terms of the geographical, spatial terms of its existence, received its grounds from and, as it were, strengthened the skeleton of historical culture from another “Eurasian culture.” With the subsequent, successive superposition of Asiatic-Asian (the influence of the East) and European (the influence of the West) layers on Russian soil, this quality of Russian culture was strengthened and affirmed.

By defining Russian culture as “Eurasian”, the Eurasianists act as the conscious bearers of Russian cultural identity. On this matter, they boast even more precedents and predecessors beyond purely geographical definitions. All those thinkers of a Slavophile orientation, including Gogol and Dostoevsky (as philosophers and authors), ought to be recognized as such. The Eurasianists, in the chain of ideas, are the heirs to the powerful tradition of Russian philosophical and historiosophical thinking. This tradition most immediately traces back to the ‘30s’ and ‘40s of the 19th century, when the Slavophiles began their activities.[2] In a broader sense, a number of works of Old Russian literature, the oldest of which date back to the 15th and 16th centuries, should be counted as part of this tradition as well.

When the fall of Tsargrad [Constantinople] in 1453 sharpened Russians’ consciousness of their role as the defenders of Orthodoxy and the heirs to Byzantine cultural succession, Russia gave birth to ideas which, in a certain sense, can be considered the precedents for later Slavophile and Eurasianist ideas. Such “pioneers” of Eurasianism as Gogol or Dostoyevsky, as well as other Slavophiles and associated thinkers like Khomiakov, Leontyev, and others, surpass the contemporary “Eurasianists” in terms of the sheer scale of their historical figures. But this does not annul the condition that they and the Eurasianists share the same thoughts on a number of questions, and that the Eurasianists’ formulation of these thoughts has been more accurate than their predecessors. Insofar as the Slavophiles relied on “Slavdom” as the element that defines the culturo-historical uniqueness of Russia, they took up positions which are difficult to defend. Without a doubt, there is a culturo-historical and, above all, linguistic connection between Slavic peoples. But as an element of cultural uniqueness, the notion of Slavdom, in its empirical content as it has developed up to the present time, has little to offer.

The creative revelation of the cultural identity of the Bulgarians and Serbo-Croat-Slovenians belongs to the future. In a cultural sense, the Poles and Czechs belong to the Western “European” world and represent one of the latter’s cultural regions. Russia’s historical uniqueness clearly cannot be defined as exclusively, or even predominantly, belonging to the “Slavic” world. Intuiting this, the Slavophiles appealed in thought to Byzantium. But while emphasizing the importance of Russia’s ties with Byzantium, Slavophilia did not and could not offer a formula that fully and proportionately expresses the character of the Russian culturo-historical tradition and which captures the “oneness of nature” of Russia and its Byzantine cultural continuity. “Eurasianism” expresses both to a certain extent. The formula “Eurasianism” takes into account the impossibility of explaining and defining the past, present, and future cultural uniqueness of Russia in terms of any preferential appeal to the notion of “Slavdom”; it also points to the source of this uniqueness in Russian culture’s combination of “European” and “Asiatic-Asian” elements. Since this formula affirms the presence of the latter in Russian culture, it establishes the connection between Russian culture and the broader creative world of “Asiatic-Asian” cultures in their historic role, and this connection is exhibited as one of the strong sides of Russian culture, and it compares Russia with Byzantium, which in this very sense also wielded a “Eurasian” culture…[3]

II.

Such, in brief, is the place of the Eurasianists as conscious expounders of Russia’s culturo-historical uniqueness. But the Eurasianists’ doctrine is not limited to this recognition. Rather, with this recognition they substantiate a common concept of culture and derive from this concept concrete conclusions for interpreting what is happening in the present. First we shall present this concept, and then move on to conclusions concerning the present time. In both cases, the Eurasianists feel themselves to be the successors of the ideological cause of the above-named Russian thinkers (the Slavophiles and adjacent thinkers).

Independently of the views expressed in Germany (by Spengler), but approximately simultaneously with the appearance of the latter, the Eurasianists put forth the thesis of denying the “absoluteness” of modern “European” (i.e., in common terminology, Western European) culture, of denying the claim that the latter’s qualities constitute the “perfection” of the whole hitherto process of the cultural evolution of the world. Until altogether recently, the affirmation of such “absoluteness” and such a quality of “European” culture was firmly insisted upon, and today persists in the brain of “Europeans”; moreover, this assertion has been blindly accepted in the form of a faith by the higher circles of “Europeanizing” societies and peoples, particularly by the greater part of the Russian intelligentsia. The Eurasianists have challenged this situation with the recognition that many of the achievements and structures of “European” consciousness, especially those of an ideological and moral nature, are relative. The Eurasianists have noted how the European has time and again called “savage” and “backwards” everything which can by no means be objectively seen as standing below its own achievements, and everything which is simply not similar to the European’s own manner of seeing and acting. Even if it were possible to objectively show the superiority of the latest science and technology in some fields over all the other achievements of this type accomplished over the course of observable world history, it is still essentially impossible to offer any such proof when it comes to matters of ideology and morality. In light of the internal sense of morality and freedom of philosophical conviction which, for the “Eurasian” concept, are the only criteria for evaluating the ideological and moral fields, the much younger and more modern Western European turns out to be not only not superior but, on the contrary, inferior in comparison with the corresponding achievements of various “ancient”, “savage”, and “backwards” peoples. [4] The Eurasianist concept signifies a decisive rejection of culturo-historical “Eurocentrism”, and this rejection stems not from some emotional worries, but from certain scientific and philosophical preconditions…One of the latter is the rejection of the universalist perception of culture which reigns among modern “European” notions. This universalist view encourages Europeans to indiscriminately qualify certain peoples as “cultured” and others as “un-cultured.” It bears recognition that in the cultural evolution of the world we encounter “cultural environments” and “cultures”, some of which have achieved a great deal, while other less. Yet determining precisely what a given cultural environment has achieved is only possible upon distinguishing between branches of culture.

A cultural environment which is low in some sectors of culture might time and again prove to be higher in others. There can be no doubt that the ancient inhabitants of Easter Island in the Great [Pacific] Ocean “lagged behind” the modern English in very many branches of empirical knowledge and technology, but this did not prevent their culture from manifesting a measure of originality and creativity against which the sculpturing of modern England can lay no claims. Similarly, Muscovite Rus of the 16th-17th centuries was behind Western Europe in many industries, but this did not hinder it from creating a “self-initiating” epoch of artistic creativity, from developing its own unique and remarkable types of “towered” and “patterned” churches which cannot but force one to admit that, in terms of artistic creation, Muscovite Rus stood above the majority of Western European countries of its time. The same is the case in other eras of the existence of this very same “cultural environment.” Muscovite Rus of the 16th-17th centuries gave birth, as previously said, to a “self-initiating” era of church building, but its developments in iconography marked a clear decline in comparison to the achievements of Novgorod and Suzdal in the 14th and 15th centuries. We have cited such examples from the sphere of fine arts as the most visual. But also in the case of knowledge of an external nature, if we distinguish between the fields of “theoretical knowledge” and “living vision”, then it would turn out that the “cultural environment” of modern Europe, while attaining success in the field of “theoretical knowledge” has, in comparison with many other cultures, seen decline in the field of “living vision.” The “savage” and “black man” perceives a number of natural phenomena more subtly and precisely than the most learned modern “naturalist.” Examples of this could be multiplied to infinity; let us say further that the whole sum of “facts of culture” is but one continuous example of the fact that only upon examining culture with a view to deconstructing and differentiating between fields can we arrive at any complete knowledge of its evolution and character. This examination can be accomplished with three basic concepts: “cultural environment”, the “eras” of the latter’s existence, and “cultural fields.” Any analysis is duly confined to a certain “cultural environment” and a certain “era.” Where we draw the borders of these depends on the point of view and purpose of study. The character and degree of division of “culture” into “fields” depends on these factors. It is important to emphasize the fundamental necessity of division, as it eliminates the uncritical examination of a culture as an undifferentiated totality…A differentiated consideration of culture shows that there are no indiscriminate “cultured” and “un-cultured” peoples, and that the most diverse peoples whom “Europeans” call “savages” by all means wield “culture” in their customs, traditions, and knowledge and in some fields and from some points of view stand high.

III.

The Eurasianists are drawn to those thinkers who deny the existence of any universal “progress” which is, at any rate, determined by the above-presented concept of “culture.” If the evolutionary line moves differently in different fields, then this means that there is not and cannot be any common upward movement, any gradual, steady, common “perfection”, insofar as one or another cultural environment, or a whole number of cultural environments, while “improving” from one or another point of view, might often be declining in another. This postulate is applicable to the ‘European’ cultural environment in particular: its scientific and technological “perfection” has been bought, from the point of view of the Eurasianists, at the price of ideological and most of all religious impoverishment. This dual nature of its achievements is clearly expressed in its approach to the economy. For many long centuries in the history of the Old World, there existed a certain common relationship between the ideological-moral-religious element on the one hand and the economic on the other. More precisely, there existed a certain ideological subordination of the economy, and it is precisely this permeation of the whole approach to economic matters by the religio-moral element that allowed historians of economic doctrines (for example, the old 19th century German-Hungarian historian Kautz, whose works retain a certain significance to this day) to unite into one group, in terms of their approaches to economic matters, such diversely ranging landmarks as the literature of China, the Iranian laws of the Vendidad, Mosaic law, and the works of Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and Western medieval theologians. The economic philosophy of these milestones is, in a definite sense, a philosophy of “subordinated economy.” These doctrines emphasize, as something necessary and due, the link between the satisfaction of our economic needs and the common elements of morality and religion. The economic philosophy of the European “new ages” is the opposite of this view. Although not always in direct words, but often enough in the foundations of its worldview, the new European economic philosophy asserts the circle of economic phenomena to be something self-sufficient, a value in itself which encompasses and manifestly exhausts all the ends of human existence…It would be a sign of spiritual blindness to deny the enormity of those purely cognitive achievements and successes in understanding and envisioning the economic phenomena which the new political economy has realized and amassed. But in acting as an empirical science, and being to a certain and large extent none other than such, the new political economy, in a number of its postulates, imposes itself upon minds and eras as a metaphysics…Similar to how the economic ideas of ancient legislators, philosophers, and theologians were associated with certain metaphysical views, so are the economic ideas of modern economists tied to such values. If the metaphysics of the former was the philosophy of “subordinated economics”, then the metaphysics of the latter is the philosophy of “militant economism.” The latter is, in a certain sense, an ideological price which the new Europe has paid for the quantitatively enormous economic rise that it has experienced in the modern age, especially over the past century. There is something instructive to be found in this picture: at the end of the Middle Ages and in the early modern centuries, the ancient wisdom of the primordial moral covenant which restrained man’s selfish instincts with words of exhortations and denunciations – in a word, the philosophy of “subordinated economics” – collapsed under the pressure of the new ideas of modern times which presumptuously asserted the theories and practices of “militant economism.” [5] Historical materialism is the most complete and acute expression of the latter.

Thus, the link between the philosophy of “subordinated economics” on the one hand, and “militant economism” on the other, in terms of a certain approach to matters of religion is observable in empirical ideological reality. If the philosophy of “subordinated economics” is and has always been an appendage to one or another theistic worldview, then historical materialism is ideologically tied to atheism. Hence the atheistic essence concealed within historical materialism which, like the wolf of a fairy tale, conceals itself from time to time with the mask of the sheep’s clothing – that of empirical science. In Russia, the atheistic worldview has accomplished an historic triumph, as state power is in the hands of atheists and has become an instrument of atheistic preaching. Without going into the question of the “historical responsibility” for what is happening in Russia, but while also not wishing to annul anyone’s responsibility, the Eurasianists understand that the essence which has been received and subsequently introduced into life by Russia – by virtue of the receptivity and excitement of its spiritual being – is, in its source, in its spiritual origin, not the Russian essence. The Communist sabbat has dawned in Russia as a perfection of more than two centuries of “Europeanization.” Recognizing that the spiritual essence of the Communism of the ruling state in Russia is, in a special way, the reflected ideological essence of European modernity (the “new ages”) is a postulation which is empirically grounded to a high degree. Here one should also consider the origins of Russian atheism in the ideas of the European “Enlightenment”, the introduction of socialist ideas into Russia from the West, the link between Russian Communist “methods” and the ideas of the French Syndicalists, as well as the significance and “cult” of Marx in Communist Russia. In seeing the ideological essence of the European “new ages” in such a way, taken to its logical conclusion, the Russians who have not accepted Communism and, at the same time, have not lost their abilities to think consistently, understand that they cannot return to the foundations of modern “European” ideology. The experience of the Communist revolution implies for the Eurasianists’ consciousness a kind of truth, both old and new. Healthy social housing can only be built on an inseparable connection between man and God, man and religion. Non-religious housing and a non-religious state must be rejected. This rejection harbors no preconceived claims regarding specific constitutional-legal forms. Such a form, in the Eurasianists’ view, could exist harmlessly under certain conditions, such as in the “separation of Church and state.” But in essence, it is yet highly significant that what is perhaps the first government in world history to be consistently atheist and which has turned the profession of atheism into the official confession of the Communist government, has turned out to be, as in the prophetic words of the most profound Russian philosopher of the late 19th century, Leontiev, “organized torment” – that is to it say it has become a system of shocking and destroying the “common blessing” or “common good” (supposedly in whose name the Communist authorities have installed themselves), of such abuse of the human personality that all images fade and all words are powerless in describing the terrible, unprecedented, blasphemous atrociousness of this reality. We shall repeat: the circumstance that the domination of the first consistently atheistic government has turned out to be the domination of all that is beast-like is not a coincidence. Historical materialism and its complementing atheism unveil and unleash all those primordial, creatural instincts, including those primordially economic ones which, in the final analysis, amount to extortion. The main determining force of social being under the conditions of the ideological reign of materialism and atheism is hate, and its worthy fruit is the torment of all which, sooner or later, cannot but lead to the final fruit: the torment of the tormentors.

Russia has seen through the triumph of historical materialism and atheism, but the laws which have manifested themselves over the course of its revolution far from concern Russia alone. The cult of primordial economic interest and animalistic primordiality has, by virtue of abundant germination, sprouted in the consciousness of peoples beyond Russia. Yet this cult cannot form the basis for long and prosperous community outside of Russia. The destructive forces that have accumulated under these conditions will sooner or later exhaust the forces of social creation. This problem must be beheld in all its depth and breadth. The pressure of materialist and atheist views must be opposed with an ideological essence whose content must be precious and voluminous. There can be no hesitation.

With hitherto unprecedented directness and uncompromising determination, and on the broadest possible front – everywhere – it is necessary to initiate and lead a struggle against all that is to even the slightest degree related to materialism and atheism. The evil must be traced back to its roots, it is necessary to literally eradicate it. It would be superficial and impotent to attempt to combat only the most acute manifestations of historical materialism and atheism and one communism. The problem is posed much deeper and more substantially. We must declare war on “militant economism” wherever it manifests itself. In the name of a religious worldview, we must gather forces to fight with passionate feeling, clear thoughts, and full understanding against the specific spirit of the new Europe.

Insofar as the latter has reached its historical and ideological limits, at which it finds itself presently, it can be said with great certainty that at some point in the future one of the two following scenarios will happen: either the cultural environment of the new Europe will perish and dissipate like smoke in torturous, tragic shock, or the “critical epoch”, as the Simonists term it, which began in Western Europe with the end of the Middle Ages, will come to its end and be replaced by an “organic epoch”, an “epoch of faith.”

Ancient wisdom cannot be flouted with impunity beyond well known limits for sake of the fact that it is truth. It is not on the basis of erecting a higher principle out of primordial, selfish human instincts as taught by the philosophy of “militant economism”, but on the basis of curbing and restraining these instincts with an enlightened religious pulse that the highest measure of the “common good” possible on earth can be achieved.

A society which succumbs to an exceptional concern with its earthly goods will sooner or later be deprived of them – such is the terrible lesson that is translucent in the experience of the Russian Revolution. The Eurasianists have attempted to fully and entirely understand and consciously grasp this experience, to derive all the lessons that stem from it, and to be fearless on this matter unlike those who, reeling in turmoil and timidity from the bestial image of Communism, cannot refuse themselves that which constitutes the basis or root of Communism – those who, holding the plow, look backwards; those who try to pour new wine into old furs; and those who, upon seeing the new truth of the abomination of Communism, are incapable of renouncing the old filth of “militant economism” in any and all of its forms…

Personal faith is insufficient. A faithful person must be part of the greater spiritual community. The Eurasianists are Orthodox. The Orthodox Church is that light that illuminates the path ahead of them. The Eurasianists call upon their countrymen to strive towards Her, towards Her Gifts, and towards Her Grace. The Eurasianists are not disconcerted by the terrible distemper that has been instigated by the atheists and theomachists that are rising in the Russian Orthodox Church. The Eurasianists believe that there is enough spiritual strength, and that struggle leads to enlightenment. The Orthodox Church is the realization of higher freedom. Its primordial element is that of conciliation, unlike that of the element of power which prevails in the breakaway Roman Church. It seems to the Eurasianists that in harsh worldly affairs one cannot do without harsh authority, but in spiritual and Church affairs, only graceful freedom and conciliation compose the essence of good leaders. “Europe”, meanwhile, in some of its parts, is destroying the effectiveness of government and is introducing tyrannical power into Church affairs.

The Orthodox Church has for many centuries only shined upon those peoples who have remained faithful to Her; she has shed light through the truths of her creed and the feats of heir ascetics. Perhaps new periods are dawning now, as the modern Orthodox Church, continuing the line of succession of the Ancient Eastern Church, has received to be the main principle of its existence a complete lack of bias towards approaches to forms of economic life (as opposed to the methods of the Western Church, which for many centuries fought against charging loans with interest), and towards the achievements of human thought. Perhaps it is for this reason that none other than the Orthodox Church has been called upon, to the greatest extent and as part of the new religious epoch, to cover the achievements of the latest economic technology and science, to cleanse them of the ideological superstructures of “militant economism”, materialism, and atheism, just as in the times of Constantine, Theodosius, and Justinian, the Ancient Eastern Church succeeded in encompassing, in the genuine and inspired “era of faith”, an altogether complex and developed economic life as well as significant freedom in theological-philosophical thinking.

In modern economic technology and empirical science, regardless of their hitherto development, there is nothing that would exclude the possibility of their existence and prosperity in the bosom of a new era of faith. The combination of modern technology and science with the ideology of “militant economism” and atheism is by no means necessary and inevitable. From a religious point of view, economic technology is, regardless of the limits of its abilities, a means to realize the Covenant bestowed by the Creator upon the creation of the human race: “They may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Gen 1:26). Empirical science is, from a religious point of view, the revelation of a picture of the Divine world that, as knowledge progresses, more perfectly, fully, and evermore clearly reveals the Wisdom of the Creator.

IV.

Eurasianism is not only a system of historiosophical or theoretical doctrines. It strives to combine thought and deed and to ultimately lead to the affirmation of a certain methodology of action alongside this system of theoretical views. The main problem which stands before Eurasianism in this regard is the problem of synthesizing a religious view of life and the world with the greatest empirically founded practicality. The posing of this problem is substantiated by the whole character of Eurasianism. The Eurasianists are essentially and at once advocates of religious principles as well as consistent empiricists. Their ideology is born out of facts. In their characterization of the Russian world as “Eurasian”, it is as if their bodies are adjoined to each expanse of their native land, to each section of this world’s history.

Understanding facts is insufficient. Facts need to be governed in the plastic process of history. As people who perceive and feel the world religiously arrive at this task, they find themselves faced with the problem of evil in all of its nakedly glaring and mystically shocking reality. The Eurasianists feel the reality of evil in the world to the utmost extent – in themselves, in others, and in private and social life. They are the least utopian of all. In their consciousness of the damage of sin and the empirical imperfection of human nature arising out of such, they in no way agree to build their calculations on the premise of the “goodness” of human nature. Insofar as this is the case, the task of acting “in the world” arises to be a tragic task, for the “world lies in evil.” The tragedy of this task is inescapable. The one thing towards which the Eurasianists strive is to be in harmony in their thoughts and deeds at the very height of this tragedy. Firm philosophical conviction and, we would say, the very nature of the Russian historical and national character in which the Eurasianists participate, exclude the possibility of sentimentally approaching this task. Consciousness of the sinfulness of this world does not exclude but, on the contrary, demands courage in empirical decisions. No ends justify the means. Sin always remains sin. But while acting “in the world”, sin must not be feared. There are situations in which one must take burden upon himself, for idle “holiness” would be an even greater sin. In the practical sphere, for the Eurasianists, the problem of “right” versus “left” political and social solutions has been annulled. This subdivision is irresistibly important to those who, in their ultimate ends, cling solely to the limited realities of human existence, and have lost their minds amidst the notions and facts of political and economic application. Whoever relates to these questions in this manner has no other values beyond concrete political and social resolutions of “left” or “right”; and for every such resolution, every such person is supposed to stand steadily and “with frenzy”, for beyond such resolutions and himself, like of the spiritual heights, nothing remains. If a political or economic direction which has been adopted turns out to be unsuitable to the demands of life and impractical, then any consistent person must nevertheless cling to it, for the direction is he himself. This is not the approach to practical solutions of a Eurasianist. For the Eurasianist, religious reliance is essential, and it is acquired beyond the sphere of political and economic empiricism. Insofar as decisions in the latter sphere allow for religious appraisals, a “right” or “left” decision may be good in different situations, just as one or the other may be bad in others. The greatness of number of practical resolutions is seen indifferently from a religious point of view. While understanding all the whole importance of political and economic applications, and while simultaneously not attributing supreme values to them, the Eurasianists can bring to the religiously-indifferent spheres applications with an open-mindedness and freedom inaccessible to people of other worldviews. In all practical decisions, the demands of life are, beyond any prejudice, the guiding principle of the Eurasianist. Hence in some decision the Eurasianist may be more radical than the most radical, while in other cases more conservative than conservatives. Historical perception is organically inherent to a Eurasianist, and the sense of continuing historical tradition is an integral part of his worldview. But this feeling is not regenerated in a pattern. The Eurasianist is bound to no patterns whatsoever – only the subject of the matter, with the full understanding of the nature of phenomena, shines through to him from the depths of every problem.

The present Russian reality more than any other demands precisely such an approach “to the essence.” The Eurasianists’ approach to the spiritual element of the revolution has been expressed previously, but in its material-empirical guise, in the ratio of political power between separate groups which it has created, and in the new distribution of property, the revolution should in large part be seen as an unavoidable “geological” fact. A sense of reality and elementary state-feel compels this recognition. Out of all the acting groups of a “non-revolutionary” spirit, the Eurasianists might be the ones who can go further along the path of the radical and encompassing recognition of this fact. Facts of political influence and the distribution of property, which in this case the matter concerns, are not of primary, self-evident importance to the Eurasianists, but are only secondary values. This eases the task of recognizing fact for the Eurasianists. But the fact in many cases is the product of abomination and crime. In this lies the severity of the problem. But since abomination and crime have been allowed by the Will of God to become an objective historical fact, it must be considered that the recognition of this fact does not contradict the Will of God. Whatever be the extent of the direct worship of fact lies in the empirical necessities of the era which must find a way out of the revolution. In religious terms, this necessity of fact-worship can be equated to temptation through which one must pass: to give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s (that is, to take into account all the empirical political-economic demands of the era), without surrendering and harming God. From the point of view of the Eurasianists, the task at hand is to redeem and to transform this abomination and crime with the establishment of a new religious era that will shine its radiant light upon all that is sinful, dark, and terrible. This is possible not in the order of the dialectical disclosure of history, which mechanically and “Marxistly” turns all “evil” into “good”, but in the process of the internal accumulation of moral force, in the face of which even the necessity of fact-worship would pose no overwhelming temptation.

\*\*\*

Footnotes:

[1] In Russian and some Romano-Germanic languages, two adjectives for “Asia” have been produced: “Asian” and “Asiatic.” The first, in its historical meaning, referred primarily to the Roman province encompassing the Western part of Asia Minor, and then to the diocese, whenceforth the mainland continent of the Old World acquired this name. “Asia”, “Asian”, and “Asians” were employed in the original, narrower sense in Acts of the Apostles 19:20. The adjective “Asiatic” concerns the whole continent. The root of the words “Eurasia”, “Eurasian”, and “Eurasians” is the first, more ancient designation, yet not because “Asianness” was constructed exclusively for the Roman province and diocese, but rather because the Eurasianists appeal to a much wider historical and geographical world. Due to a number of misconceptions, the word “Asiatic” has on the tongue of Europeans acquired an odious connotation. This odious seal, which testifies only to ignorance, can be removed by way of appealing to the more ancient name, as is accomplished in the designation of “Eurasianism.” In this term, “Asian” refers to the cultural circle not only of Asia Minor, but of “Greater” Asia. In particular, the Eurasianists highly appreciate the cultures that inhabited Asia in the apostolic and subsequent centuries, i.e., Hellenic and Byzantine culture, and the Eurasianists by all means seek paradigms for modern spiritual and cultural creativity in some branches of this culture.

[2] From the point of view of historiosophical concepts, Eurasianism as a matter of course lies in the same sphere as the Slavophiles. However, the problem of the relationship between these currents cannot be reduced to that of a simple succession. The prospects opening up before Eurasianism are conditioned, on the one hand, by the scale of the ongoing catastrophe and, on the other, by the emergence and manifestation of completely new culturo-historical and social factors which, naturally, did not play a role in the construction of the Slavophile worldview. Moreover, much of what the Slavophiles considered to be foundational and indisputable has since become obsolete over the past several decades or has been exposed to be essentially inconsistent. In some sense, Slavophilia was a provincial and “domestic” current. Now, in connection with the real opportunities opening up before Russia to become the center of a new European-Asiatic (Eurasian) culture of the greatest historical significance, any conceptualization and realization of a holistic, creatively conservative worldview (as Eurasianism considers itself to be) must determine its appropriate, unparalleled paradigms and scales.

[3] The latter definition can claim substantial historical accuracy. The essence of Byzantine culture was determined by a combination of the most diverse elements. Currents of religious, artistic, and other impulses which flowed from the East – from Palestine, Syria, Armenia, Persia, and Asia Minor, as well as some parts of Africa – mixed with perceptions of the Western state and legal tradition (as in the existence and development of Roman law in Byzantium). Moreover, the contact with steppe cultures that was so definitive to the forming of Russian culture did not fail to leave its traces in Byzantium as well. Much in Byzantine fashions and mores can be traced back to being borrowed from the steppe “barbarians” who in successive waves closed in on the borders of the empire.

[4] The same situation applies to the field of art, and in particular to some branches of fine art (artistic architecture, sculpting, painting), where the inadequacy of the latest “European” creations is especially evident in comparison with that achieved in more ancient epochs and by other peoples.

[5] Militant economism, as an element in the sprit of the human being, has existed and exists everywhere. Yet it is significant that it is in the new Europe that this principle has been elevated to be an ideological principle.

[6] The Eastern Church, in rejecting the proposal of a ban on borrowed interest at the Council of Nicaea in 325, thereby recognized authoritative interference into economic life to be unbefitting of the Church. The Eastern Church stood on this position in all subsequent centuries and continues to stand on it today. The practice of the Western Church has been different: the ban on the charging interest on loans was maintained for a millennium and still in the 18th century Turgot was forced to reckon with such as a reality of life.