Valery Korovin – “Eurasianism Then and Now, Russia and Beyond”

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The Russian dream is not a dream of Europe, nor a dream about Asia. The Russian dream is the dream of a special Eurasian civilization.

The notion of Eurasianism has acquired such wide circulation that it has long since seemed to have become something self-evident, that is to say obvious and intelligible. Moreover, the broad circulation of this concept has opened up an equally wide breadth of interpretations, frequently entailing the full freedom to understand Eurasianism to be whatever one pleases. In the same vein, this has allowed those who consider themselves opponents of Eurasianist doctrine to attribute to Eurasianism any and all sorts of negative features.

Eurasianism itself is at once both a fairly strict notion and capacious one, as Eurasianism is a concrete worldview which demands continuous clarifications in order to avoid too broad of interpretations on the part of its supporters which yields, at the same time, equally extensive ground for criticism from opponents.

Eurasianism consists of several basic, constant characteristics whose systematic affirmation is simply impossible to avoid.

Against the Universality of the West

In fact, the point of departure for the very emergence of Eurasianist initiatives was reacting to the West’s (at the time Europe’s) arrogant assertion of the universality of its historical path and the achievements of its own European and, overall, Western civilization. It reached the point that the West appropriated for itself the very notions of “development”, “progress”, and “advancement”, and the very word “civilization” was equated with the phenomenon of Western civilization.

Taking its own experience of development as a foundation, the West simply proclaimed that only its development is really development. Whoever does not repeat the Western path is not developing. Whoever does not follow the West in everything is not on the path of progress and, as follows, is overboard the ship of civilization, for civilization is the West – while all others are either savages catching up with the West or barbarians void of the will to become the West.

At the time, humanity was mesmerized by the steam engine, the first rudiments of the scientific-technological revolution, and the unprecedented wonders created by Western engineers. Taking advantage of this confusion influenced by such fascination with these unprecedented inventions, the West (at the time Europe) proclaimed itself – in a not so ceremonial fashion – to be the ultimate standard of human development, period. By and large, Europe thereby isolated itself from the rest of humanity, at once placing itself at the center. This is precisely what yielded the reactive response of those who refused to recognize arrogant European universality. Nikolay Trubetzkoy’s Europe and Mankind thus became a kind of manifesto which laid the foundation for the development of Eurasianist thought.

Thus follows the main principle of Eurasianism: the rejection of the universality of the West and its historical experience. Eurasianism is not Westernism taken as universality. The West denies other, non-Western civilization their own paths, whereas Eurasianism refuses to recognize the West’s path as being universal for all.

Humanity is diverse and consists of a whole range of, as Danilevsky called them, culturo-historical types, and the West is only one of them – it is neither the only nor the best one, nor universal. This is the main principle at the heart of Eurasianism. Here we could add that the East is also not a source of universality and, even more so, cannot claim supremacy.

Russia as a Civilizational Subject

Of course, it cannot be denied that some peoples and states have genuinely followed the West, been seduced by its achievements, uncritically accepted its cultural codes, and imitated Europe in its way of life, parodying and blindly imitating the logic of actions and the type of thinking of Westerners. There are states which have consistently tried to reproduce the Western culturo-historical type.

Russia has not escaped this fate either, as under the influence of its elites Russia has from time to time plunged into the abyss of frenzied Westernism, virtually dissolving therein and, as a consequence, decomposing, losing fragments of itself, only to recoil and gather new forces. If we examine Russian history in terms of conditional stages, then we will see a history consisting of an internal struggle between Eurasianism and Westernism. Periods of Westernism have meant the surrender of positions, defeat, and decay; periods of Eurasianism mean triumph over the West, conceptualizing ourselves as something special – as neither Western nor Eastern civilization, but as a new reassembly.

Speaking of Russia itself, we can turn to the second postulate of Eurasianism: Russia is a self-sufficient, independent civilization, a special culturo-historical type, a unique, original culture which has synthesized (and not merely mixed or blindly taken over) some of the best manifestations of European and Asian cultures. In this synthesis, which cannot be reduced to a mere blending or imitation, lies the secret of our uniqueness. The particular type of Russian statehood is the synthesis of the political vertical and rigid centralization of the Empire of Genghis Khan with the faith, culture, and flexibility of the Byzantine Empire which, if we look at such from Russia, laid to the West.

The Russian person is a representative of a people which has absorbed the best of the cultures of East and West without merging with them in blind imitation. The Russian, as part of a united, organic community, is whole and subjective, sovereign, and independently determines their fate. This is their Eurasianist essence – which is neither European, in the sense of imitating Europe, nor essentially parodying the European, nor Asian, which is a bit too remote, foreign, terse, and not corresponding to the subtle chords of the Russian soul, which are instead rather consonant with Greek civilization. This essence is independent and Eurasian.

A Russian can love Europe, but at the same time remain himself – for in thoughtlessly accepting European cultural codes, he ceases to be Russian – just as he can love Asia and the peoples of the East and borrow the best from them. In this sense, the Russian is open to cultural exchange, but closes whenever West or East attempt to remake him in their own image. The Russian, as Dostoyevsky wrote, is the “all-person”, by which was meant that the Russian has empathy for the peoples of the East and the peoples of the West. But in order to preserve himself, the Russian must always remain himself – the Russian people, Russian culture, Russian civilization with its own integral, inseparable Russian history spanning centuries.

To be a Eurasian[ist] means to be part of a special, unique civilization, but this concerns more than Russians alone. To be oneself – to be a people, a culture, an organic community – is the right of any people, any culturo-historical type, any civilization, whether in Europe or in Asia. Whoever recognizes this right is a Eurasianist. Whoever does not is most likely an arrogant civilizer of the West, an oppressor of peoples, a colonialist, an arrogant Anglo-Saxon, a hegemon claiming global dominance by virtue of “exceptionality”, i.e., this person is not a Eurasianist but his opponent – ontologically, existentially, and indelibly such.

The Empire of Peoples

The Russian loves his people. Because the Eurasianist loves his people, he understands how a people can be loved, and insists on its organic integrity, its unique identity, its Tradition, and unique selfhood. Thus, the Russian Eurasianist accepts all the diversity of ethnoi, peoples, and political nations as a given, recognizing and accepting their unique identities. In this lies yet another thesis of Eurasianism: the acceptance of the diversity of communities, which is very Russian, open, and broad in essence.

This openness and breadth of acceptance of all other identities, this “all-humanity” of Russians is taken by many to be a mistake, as some call for mixing with others (which is refuted by the Eurasianist thesis on the preservation of one’s unique identity), while others call for absorbing others as if, as others say, Russians are omnivorous and voracious in their imperial manners. Both of these are wrong, naive, or deliberately misleading.

Mixing is an absolutely liberal, post-human principle implanted, like many other things, by the West and its civilizers driving humanity into a global melting pot. This is an anti-Eurasianist approach, as it destroys organic community, cultural identity, and the selfhood of peoples, grinding them into atoms of individuals. The absorbing of other peoples as well, the imposition of one’s cultural codes onto them, is just as absolutely a non-Eurasianist approach, but rather resembles the Westernist, colonial, exploitative one which considers other, non-Western peoples to be aboriginal savages, who are more often than not equated with wildlife.

Yet it is precisely the contributions by many dozens and hundreds of different peoples to our history that gave rise to unique Russian civilization as Eurasian and diverse, not mixed but ordered, in which the subject is not the atomic individual, as in the West, but the organic community, the ethnos or people.

One can become Russian by accepting Russian identity, taking the Russian culturo-historical code to be their foundation, accepting the Russian language as their own, and merging with the organic community of the Russian people. But this can only be done voluntarily. A Russian, especially a Eurasianist, will never force others into the Russian World, for such excesses mean either assimilating to the West’s arrogance and imposition of its own experience, or assimilation to the East, with its crudeness and voluntarism. The Eurasianist approach is open to diversity on the condition that one can preserve their own subjectivity. The Eurasian Empire does not exploit, but equips others, accepting peoples as they are into a common, Eurasian, strategic unity, not a “prison of peoples” or the melting pot of Western colonizers.

The Eurasian Codes of Russian History

During periods of Eurasian enlightenment, Russians have rallied the peoples of Eurasia and beyond to revolt against the West. During moments of blur and madness, they, or more precisely the Russian elites, and following them the pliable masses (such is a sociological law), have followed the West, thus committing to self-liquidation as a large state, shattering into a small one, and abandoning this great project, losing almost everything only to once again re-awaken and re-gather for new, great fulfillments – such is the genuinely Russian, Eurasian scale – in pursuit of the inextinguishable Russian dream.

These constants of the Eurasian-Russian being will never disappear, not even in the darkest midnights of our history. They simply become momentarily invisible, we lose them from view. But sooner or later our Tsars, our leaders, and our General Secretaries rediscover them, reawaken, and are moved by these codes. Russia once again turns into the Eurasian subject, i.e., that which knows, thinks, and acts in contrast to the object of extinction [to which Russia is reduced] during moments of retreat from the Eurasian mission in favor of the West, towards which Western thoughts and deeds are aimed.

Over the past few centuries, we have had too much of the West. The Westernist elites of late Romanov Russia ceased to understand, much less feel their people. Then the Marxist ideological experiments of the Bolsheviks were taken from the West, and only later adapted to the Russian way and the Eurasian civilizational constants during Stalin’s imperial enlightenment. Then once again we fell into the liberal experiment of the “Khrushchev thaw”, then Brezhnev’s slightly frostbitten conservative stagnation, then into final collapse and defeat amidst Gorbachev’s “Perestroika”, and then to the very extreme edge, to nearly ceasing to exist under Yeltsin’s bloody oligarchical rule which nearly killed Russia entirely.

But then the Eurasian constants were once again rediscovered – Russia was reassembled, the regional Fronde of “national republics” was suppressed, and now Eurasian integration has risen with the construction of the Eurasian geopolitical axes of Moscow-Beijing and Moscow-Delhi, and the nearly materialized axis of Paris-Berlin-Moscow, which could destroy Western hegemony, and which almost appeared at the start of the destruction of Iraq.

Yet liberalism has not let go of us. The West is swarming through its networks and color revolutions, continuing to encircle Russia from all sides, all with its own liberal wing within the Russian government, monetary privileges, the liberalization of the economy, pension reform, VAT hikes, and other liberal experiments on this completely non-liberal country and its peoples. There is too much of the West. A new Eurasian breath, broad and large in scale, is needed. It is time to turn our back to the West and turn towards the East.

Applied Russian Eurasianism: Towards the East

Having suffocated in the stifling corner of the moldy ideological closet of Europe, we are now turning towards the East, where wide expanses open up before us, giving us a breath of fresh air and presenting us with what is a truly Eurasian scope. The new course of Russian Eurasianism is the Far East.

In the Far East, Russia can open a new chapter of cooperation with the civilizations of the East, with China, Japan, and Korea, thereby stretching the Russian look all the way to Oceania, to Indonesia and Australia. “There a synthesis is created in which Russia is combined with the great civilizations of the Pacific Ocean”, emphasizes the Russian writer Alexander Prokhanov. But this must now be on our own, Eurasian conditions, without the annoying West and its “exceptionalism”, and accomplished while preserving our uniqueness and respecting the civilizational and cultural specificities of others for the sake of mutual understanding and cooperation within the multipolar world that is taking shape before our very eyes. This is the project of the new Eurasianism of the 21st century.

Without liberalism and nationalism – these chimeras of the West – and without “mandatory” Western interference, control and surveillance, we can initiate a new stage in the development of the world in which the West will be merely one civilization – not the only one – in the new, Eurasian world of equal cooperation between civilizations. This will be a world not of nations, not of liberal, atomic, mercantile individuals in the Brownian motion of the post-human cauldron, but a new world of civilizations uniting culturally close peoples into large strategic blocs. Such are the principles of Russian Eurasianism, of Chinese, Indian, and Arab Eurasianism, of the Eurasianisms of Ibero-America and Africa liberated from Western domination.

We are now forced to think in terms of the interests of the West, to proceed from its premises and criteria, but our Eastern, Eurasian project has its own, non-Western constants which ought to be remembered.

Russian interests in this Eastern-oriented Eurasian project lie in the need to ensure Russia’s strategic security on the entire Pacific coast, and in the Russian Far East in particular. This necessitates pushing American presence as far away from us as possible – indeed, out of sight.

Japan or China, or Japan and China?

The Eurasian[ist] geopolitical imperative lies in liberating the Far East from American military bases, first and foremost Japan, which was subjugated and humiliated by the barbaric bombings of 1945. This is how the West promotes its values: on the wings of strategic bombers inflicting atomic death upon hundreds of thousands of completely innocent civilians. This is how the West has captured its bridgeheads, by setting up military bases outside of local jurisdictions, dictating their own will, and continuing to not only militarily, but also economically and culturally rape Japan and rigidly impose their surrogates.

Russia’s Eastern, Eurasian vector entails direct and open dialogue with Japan – but not merely about the islands known in Japan as the “Northern territories”, as such is a false object to which our attention is being diverted by the current American overlords of the once great Japanese people. Washington whispers into the ears of Japanese authorities about how the Russian took four rocks from them all the while as America itself took all of Japan from the Japanese. Dialogue between Moscow and Tokyo must be address the liberation of all of Japan, rising up against American occupation, dumping American military bases into the ocean, and building a new Eurasian geopolitical axis between Moscow and Tokyo.

At the same time, Russia’s Eurasian geopolitical vector must develop in the direction of China. And once again: it is none other than Western strategists, such as Brzezinski, who is currently burning in hell, and others of his ilk, who claim that it is impossible to have equally developed, balanced strategic relations with both Japan and China at the same time. This is impossible only for the US, because it only plays on contradictions and pitting one against the other, whether Japan and China, Japan and Russia, or Russia and China, in the end of which the US claims all for itself.

Eurasianist geopolitics annuls this false confrontation by opening up the possibility for building a Moscow-Beijing axis. But here dialogue should address another matter. If Japan is weary of American military presence, then sovereign China, possessing its own nuclear triad for deterring any American military encroachment, is weary of American economic oppression. The noose thrown by the US in its attempt to control all the world’s commodity flows, dollar accounting, the endless trillions of loans in American government bonds served as great blessings, and protective tariffs and trade wars – all of this keeps China on a short American leash. ‘Step to the right or step to the left and that will mean the end of your economy’, Uncle Sam laughs.

The New Liberation of the Far East

Russia’s Eurasian strategy in the Far East means restoring relations with North Korea, which liberals have become so accustomed to scaring us with. North Korea is an island of Russian Stalinism which we ourselves created and then, because of our own illness, dropped and abandoned to become a frozen museum of the era of Stalin’s great experiment. But the North Koreans are a hardworking people with powerful economic potential, and this country presents access to the East China Sea, for which our pilots and military instructors have already fought in the past. All of this must be restored to our common, new Eurasian project.

But here [on the Korean peninsula] we are faced with a conflict artificially created by the Americans, one which cannot be healed by their efforts, and one which has remained an unhealed, bleeding wound for decades. Occupied to this day since the freezing of the Korean War, South Korea cannot even conceive of independent policy, much less about reconciliation with the North as long as the latter refuses to surrender to the mercy of the Americans. But they will not surrender, because Koreans, like Russians, do not surrender, but defend their sovereignty to the very end. This means that Korea will not be unified until, following Japan – but perhaps before – it rises up against American military oppression and sends American bases into the ocean.

The fully-fledged unfolding of the Eurasian project in the Far East as a whole lies in the liberation of Japan, China, and Korea. For Korea in particular, this means liberation from intrusive US guardianship and the unification of the two Koreas for the sake of common development as a single state and as one people – under guarantees of nuclear cover from Russia. Only then can our common ocean – the ocean of Russia, Japan, China, and Korea – perturbed by American presence, once again become Pacific and safe.

Returning the Ocean

India lacks our military potential, our arms, and our air defense systems. But most importantly, India does not control its ocean. The Eurasianist strategy for India is a joint Russian-Indian presence in the Indian Ocean which, as in the Pacific Ocean, is currently indelibly ruled by the American 7th fleet, monopolistically and unilaterally determining the fate of all the states of the region regardless of these countries’ interests. As is the American custom, they see only their own interests.

A Russian-Indian maritime base, with its center on the island of Diego Garcia, from which it is high time to get rid of the English and their American allies, and a fleet of Russian and Indian aircraft carriers – this is the Eurasianist strategy for India, and it shall be realized not through a mere truncated economic format, but in the form of a fully-fledged geopolitical axis between Moscow and Delhi.

The Eurasianist strategy in the Far East also entails returning to Vietnam and fully restoring the previously dismantled Russian base in Cam Ranh, which we ourselves closed in hope of reciprocal peaceful steps from the US. Twenty years have passed and these expectations have not been fulfilled, which means that it is once again time to open the Cam Ranh base not only for repairing warships, but for deterring US military presence. With the very same goal, it is also once again time to open up to Vietnam as a military-strategic partner, not merely a trade partner, to guarantee its security, and to cover it with our nuclear umbrella from any repeated incursion by the annoying, ubiquitous Yankees. The same can be said for Laos.

Eurasian Demography

However, the internal dimensions of the realization of this Far Eastern Eurasianist strategy cannot be forgotten. The Russian Far East is an island of European civilization surrounded by non-European peoples. It is a landmark of the ability to remain Russians even where a culturally foreign majority of completely mentally distant civilizations hangs over us. To preserve ourselves, to remain Russians, and to take the best from the cultures of neighboring peoples – this is our advantage, and this is the essence of Russian Eurasianism, the vivid manifestation of the Eurasian civilizational synthesis. And this means that this island must be not only preserved, but transformed into a fully-fledged Russian sea, which means posing the question of demography of the Far East in the first place.

The Russian Far East should be genuinely Russian – not Chinese, and not artificially populated by migrant workers from Central Asia or the Caucasus. Russian culture is a necessary and most important component of our presence in the Far East. Without Russian cultural expansion, without full civilizational representation, we cannot preserve the Far East. Thus, our main priority should be not only extremely attentive treatment of such questions of demography, but also of migration, especially from neighboring, friendly China.

The Eurasianist approach lies in the preservation, not erosion of identity. This means China for the Chinese and the Far East for Russians and the traditional peoples of the Pan-Russian (Rossiiskii) Far East. In this regard, the border with China should be translucent, strict, and attentive if it is to be a Eurasian border, and not merely an administrative line for exploitation for profit. Without a doubt, China will have the right to expansion, but Eurasian, friendly China will realize this expansion to the South. Such is the law of Eurasianism.

Eurasian Russia is a unified power which unites under its wings numerous ethno-cultural units, languages, peoples, faiths, and religions – but without blurring, crushing, and mixing them into a melting plot as is the Western manner. The Eurasian power is not a nation and not a liberal, post-human garbage dump.

Eurasian Russia is an empire of peoples preserving their collective identity and representing the entirety of our Eurasian civilizational diversity, in the center of which stands the great Russian people, the gatherers of lands and the builders of the endless, continental Eurasian state – the ark of salvation for all of these diverse peoples.

However, the primacy of Russians does not mean that they must be at the top of a hierarchy of peoples, as is customarily thought in the West and as has been imposed upon our peoples by Western whisperers rousing them against Russians and blaming Russians for their own Western sins of colonialism, exploitation, and violence against other peoples. Russians have never allowed themselves to do such and they never will, for the Russian dream is one of just unity. Russian primacy is none other than the primacy of the highest responsibility for those whom our continental empire saves from erosion, exploitation, and “civilizing” by the West. Life without the West in harmony, common development, and mutual understanding – this is the Russian, Eurasian dream of the future.

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