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EURASIAN NATIONAL-STATE IDEALS IN THE WORKS OF N.N. ALEKSEEV

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the disclosed N.N. Alekseev state ideals of the people of the Russian Empire, which existed in the legal consciousness of the general population. Such ideals include the Josephite autocratic monarchy, the legal monarchy of non-possessors, dictatorship, the ideal of a free "Cossack" king, as well as the state ideals of sectarianism. Each such ideal, according to N.N. Alekseev, found reflection during the 1917 Revolution. These ideals are Eurasian because they are determined by the location of the Russian state, the main stages and contents of its history, the leading historical events and directions that generate them. Four of the five ideals did not constitute the official ideology of Russia, but were the result of mental work and spiritual searches of certain groups of the people of Russia – non-possessors, Cossacks, sectarians. For this reason, they can be called national-state ideals. N.N. Alekseev substantiates the important thesis that these national-state ideals were reflected in the construction of Soviet statehood after the 1917 revolution. He also cites one of the reasons for this revolution as reluctance and inability to take into account national-state ideals by the ruling circles of the Russian Empire in determining the official state ideology. In the era of the proclamation of political and ideological diversity, one of the leading constitutional and legal values and one of the foundations of the constitutional system is of particular importance to appeal to the rich domestic political and legal heritage, expressed, inter alia, in the doctrine of Eurasianism.

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Keywords: Eurasianism, non-possessiveness, Josephism, national-state ideals, N.N. Alekseev.



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1. Introduction

The work of Alekseev (2003) "Russian people and state" is devoted to ideas about statehood, which can be called alternative national-state ideals of pre-revolutionary Russia. Such a concept emphasizes the national, but at the same time, state character of these ideals, as well as focuses the reader on their alternative nature to the prevailing views and their discussions.

The name indicates that it is a coverage of the views on the state of wide layers of the Russian people. The thinker does not focus on the views of the intelligentsia, describes the state ideals of the general population. Alekseev (as cited in Borsch, 2015) begins his work from the finding of a sharp gap between the spiritual life of the upper classes and the spiritual life of the broad masses. The upper classes, starting from the time of Peter the Great, built their lives in accordance with Western European ideals, realizing these ideals to the best of their abilities. "It is deeply incorrect to think that the Russian people simply lived in continuous spiritual darkness or immersed in purely material interests. No, the Russian people in many respects lived their own spiritual lives, believed in God in their own way, had their own oral poetry, written literature, moral ideas, and customary law". The Russian people, according to Alekseev (2003), has some kind of his own political intuition, different from the views of Western peoples and at the same time not quite similar to the views of purely Eastern peoples. In this approach, the typical "Eurasianism" of the Alekseev's philosophy of state and law is manifested, but it is not without foundation, as is the approach to the Christian interpretation of the state (Nazmutdinov, 2017).

2. Problem Statement

The "Russian freemen" in its various manifestations influenced ideas about the ideal state order, partly suppressed by the prevailing ideology, partly not even conscious, but in the form of archetypes and symbols stored in the people's memory, in the ordinary sense of justice of the masses. "Removing a romantic plaque from Russian history, we must say that its determining forces were, on the one hand, the forces organizing the state, the forces of order, and, on the other hand, disorganizing, anarchist forces that are outwardly expressed in various manifestations of Russian unrest. A feature of Russian history is that this turmoil was not an attempt to organize freemen within the state order, but it represented its exit from the state. Departure from the state is a paramount fact of Russian history, which was embodied in the Cossacks and moral justification – in various political views, justifying the escapement from organized political forms of social life." The Russian history of statehood relies on a serious dichotomy, or rather, even polychotomy, since the competing principles are not only anarchism and statism, but also Josephism and covetousness, official ideology and folk ideals, and folk ideals do not go on a united front, but separately, opposing each other in many aspects.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the study are the laws of formation and substantive aspects of the national-state ideals of the Russian people. These laws determine the essence and characteristic features of the national-state ideals of the broad masses, their relationship with the life realities of pre-revolutionary Russia, and their reflection on the Great Russian Revolution that took place in 1917 (Borsch, 2015). Any historical

dialectically conditioned phenomenon has its inherent laws, i.e. stable and repetitive relationships and manifestations. People-state ideals reflect the deep currents in Russian society of the XIX–early XX centuries. and show the regular features of this society.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is to characterize the national-state ideals that existed in Russia according to the ideas of N.N. Alekseev, and who influenced the 1917 Revolution and the Soviet state formed after it (Nasyrov, 2017).

5. Research Methods

The research methodology of political and legal doctrines is based on several fundamental principles. The principle of historicism is gaining decisive importance, according to which each political and legal doctrine should be considered in its historical context, each political and legal problem in different historical eras can have a different resolution based on the context of the era. Historicism in the study is also important because it develops the traditionalist foundations of the Eurasian alternative to the state-legal development of Russia, i.e. its validity, determined by the very course of development of traditions, history, genesis and evolution of both forms of state unity and their validity. Other principles, such as the principle of completeness, comprehensiveness of research, reasoning, necessity and sufficiency of evidence, are equally applicable in this study.

6. Findings

The unlimited Josephite monarchy received theoretical justification in the state legal doctrine of Josephism and became the official ideology of the Moscow kingdom. “The idea of the Moscow Josephite monarchy was a pagan idea that accurately reproduces all the elements of ancient Eastern absolutism. The theory of eastern despotism argued that public order is a reflection of the heavenly order, that the earthly lord is the bearer of divine functions, that he is a terrible creature, punishing and merciful, that life and death of people are in his hands, that he, as a god, brings salvation subjects with whom he is connected not by legal, but by a purely moral connection. The publicists of the Moscow monarchy, and mainly Joseph Sanin and his school, exactly reproduced in their views all these basic points, which were later stated in the political theory of Ivan the Terrible. Thus, Josephism became the official ideology of the Moscow autocracy. The authors of this theory belonged to the educated classes of the Moscow state, were part of the old Moscow intelligentsia, mainly consisting of the clergy.” The formation of the Russian centralized state – the Moscow kingdom, its absorption of fragments of the Golden Horde, as if taking the place of this nomadic empire in the north-west of the Great Steppe and in the great forests, also required a state ideology adequate to this status, which became the one that emerged in the late XV-early XVI century Josephism.

These were not just the views of the ruling class, but a concept that corresponded to the expectations of the masses, as evidenced by the popular revival of the Russian monarchy after the troubled times, and the people's reaction to the reign of John IV, expressed in proverbs and sayings.

Alekseev (2003) concludes: “the people in the proverbs reproduced the theory of the autocratic monarchy, as it was in exact accordance with the pagan examples, was reproduced by the Josephites and their great-power disciple” (p. 74). A proverb is a “ready-made formula of moral behavior” of peoples whose thought sees the criterion of truth not in harmony with reason, but in originality, in the halo of indestructible tradition, bequeathed from ancestors. “A proverb is not saying nothing for nothing,” and it is not for nothing that the Russian people idolized the monarchy. The monarchy of the Josephite style became its genuine, “folk” affair.” And after the church split, until the establishment of the empire, the Old Believers, following the precepts of Joseph Volotsky, were guided by the state, accusing the official church of apostasy, and only when the official authority finally lost their spiritual authority in their eyes did they begin to resist it. And since the foundation of the empire, in the schismatic environment, the Old Testament and apocalyptic assessments of state power began to prevail, criticizing the view that there was no power not from God and that every soul should submit to those in power. Raskolniki regarded the title of emperor, as directed by N.N. Alekseev (Kulikov & Sukhanova, 2018), as pagan, the head of state was called the king, fully justifying his name “Old Believers”. All the views of the representatives of Old Moscow Orthodoxy boil down to a very simple formula: “the ancient Church instead of Nikon, the tsar instead of the emperor, Stoglav instead of the code of laws, the boyars and governors instead of officials, orders instead of the senate.”

The Moscow monarchy was regarded as a state ideal with significant reservations, the essence of which boils down to the following phrase: “the monarchy is God's work, but its order is rather an unclean business.” This is the source of the people's desire to correct these impure orders, in connection with which a whole series of “atypical” state-people's ideals (“state of truth”) is being formed, we will consider these ideals in more detail.

As an alternative to the Josephite state ideology, Alekseev (2003) calls “the intuition of the political world”, which in the era of the strengthening of Moscow was formulated by the Trans-Volga elders, led by Neil Sorsky. “This trend is primarily characterized by the conviction that every earthly state lies in sin and that therefore it can in no way be an accurate reflection and likeness of the divine order.” For this direction, salvation was not covered by service to positive religious law, but required a deep personal act, spiritual or “smart” work. “For the elders, the state of the state church, to which Orthodoxy was inclined for the first time not in the era of the synod, but even earlier, during the construction of the Moscow state, is completely unacceptable. No Christian direction contains the idea been expressed so sharply that the church should be outside state affairs. And it is erroneous to consider the named thought as a manifestation of political passivity. Exposing this norm, the elders first of all wanted to “put the church on the first spiritual beauty” so that its pastors would become true owners of a spiritual authority that restrains any illegal aspirations of a secular state.”

The idea of dictatorship was developed in the works of Ivan Peresvetov and, to a certain extent, embodied in the activities of Ivan the Terrible. According to the thinker, the following statement by Peresvetov sharply separated his doctrine from Josephism: “God loves not faith, but truth.” Alekseev (2003) expresses an idea that is rarely used to describe domestic state-legal doctrines: “Peresvetov is more likely not a Josephite, he is closer to Machiavelli, he is interested in state power in itself, and not from the point of view of its religious foundations” (p. 47). The ideal of such a philosopher is an oriental despot, a

formidable king who is called upon, first of all, to introduce his principles of justice into the state, arrange righteous courts, punish unjust nobles and deprive them of power, etc. The re-secular monarchy is a social monarchy, but the most important there is a monarchy based on the dictatorship of a selected, specially organized military group. This kind of political doctrine was embodied in the events of Ivan the Terrible. But, as another medieval writer, Ivan Timofeev, testifies, in many ways these events served not to strengthen, but to weaken the Moscow kingdom (Zolotukhina, 2011).

Alekseev (2003) also writes about this, moving on to considering the third ideal – the ideal of the “movement of the Russian freemen”. This movement arose in response to the tightening of the “sovereign tax” in the era of Ivan the Terrible. Moreover, the Russian freemen were far from the above-mentioned state ideals and inspired by “some other political and social ideas, the essence of which is very difficult to understand, because the freemen did not have their scribes and did not have their own written ideology”. To determine the political ideas of the Russian freemen, the material can be “those completely original social formations in history that until the 18th century arose outside Moscow and Lithuania, received some form of their own, lived a very special way of economic and political life, and were with the state, depending on the circumstances, in a hostile or peaceful, contractual relationship.” Further, the thinker develops a picture of the ideal state of Cossack liberty, analyzing the political structure of the Zaporozhskaya Sech. “Cossack communities, like the ancient Russian peoples, were republics that had their own princes and kings; and at the same time, they can be called monarchies, in which power belonged to the people.” In the absence of political literature, information about such a state can be gleaned from political poetry. That popular image, which was the ideal of statehood, was reflected in the epos. Alekseev analyzes in detail these ideals, considering them to be their main “state philosophy”, the essence of which can be reduced to the thought of a special Cossack free-rein. “The concept of a single Russian state has not crystallized in the Russian epos,” the Eurasian thinker notes. “Russia is still a combination of independent lands, cities and principalities, between which robbers and terrible enemies live.” The force connecting the country, in accordance with these views, is not a nation, but a religion. Also, in the folk epos there is also the image of a hero, gaining a squad and hiring to serve the princes. Hence, power relations are contractual and random.

According to the Cossack ideal in the understanding of Alekseev (2003), the main political force is the people, generally expressed in the image of the heroes. However, this democracy is nomadic, semi-anarchic, unorganized, lacking a coherent program and plans for its own state building. The political maximum is the election of their own self-proclaimed Cossack king, which was so characteristic of all Russian riots. Alekseev also sees the victory of this ideal in 1917, however, in this case, the “state of the Soviets” took the place of the impostor.

An ideal state among Russian sectarians. The difference between sectarianism and the Russian schism by N.N. Alekseev is seen in the fact that sectarianism, as a rule, radically nourished the spirit of reformism and was nourished by it. Both, however, were equally negatively opposed to the Russian government, diverging only in their assessments: radical sectarians generally recognized the state in Russia as contrary to God, and instead of accepting true faith, took a destructive godly heresy. Hence, two variants of the behavior of the faithful were proposed: active resistance for the strong, forest and desert for the weak. “From the belief that the state lies in evil and that the Antichrist reigns in it, many

schismatics and sectarians made a consistent conclusion: you need to break away from this world, you need to leave the sinful “earthly” city. The desert, according to Alekseev (2003), acquired a special poetic, romantic meaning among sectarians as an obvious means of getting rid of the bustling world. "But in this bustling world, in the name of escape from which the desert is glorified, the main disgust is the state and the bearers of power". Hence, the departure from the world was understood by some sectarians even more literally than a simple removal in the desert – as death, as self-destruction. “This self-destruction was practiced quite widely under different types and in various schismatic and sectarian senses. There were “scavengers,” “burners,” “coffiners” and others. Fear of the Antichrist, reluctance to fall into his hands and the inability to hide from him – these were the main motives for self-destruction. Self-destruction was a special religious war declared to this world mainly in the person of the state and the official church.” Here is another paradox of Russian historical reality that the Eurasian jurist draws attention to: the fires of the Inquisition did not burn in Russia, the spiritually authoritative movement of the “Volga elders” prevented this, the glow of other “fires” rose in Russia – the fires of self-destruction in the name of true faith and because of unwillingness to submit to heresy.

7. Conclusion

N.N. Alekseev is pragmatic: he conducted this analysis not for the sake of analysis itself, but to assess the tragedy that befell Russia in 1917 (as cited in Nasyrov, 2011). The thinker's conclusion is “beautiful, harsh and gloomy”, paradoxical, but also quite justified. “What really happened in the year 1917? Domination of: 1) the idea of freemen; 2) the idea of dictatorship; 3) the idea of a social dispensation on earth on the basis of communism. Prevailed the contents of the ideology of the Cossacks, the ideology of Peresvetov, Tsar Ivan and the oprichnina, the ideology of a sectarian earthly paradise built on the basis of rationalism. Western Marxism brought to us was widely used only because it corresponded to deep popular sentiments. Marxist Talmudism has remained the privilege of the new ruling class, the people are far from it and in a peculiar way are experiencing in Marxism only that which corresponds to "primitivism".

The alternative of the Eurasian concept of the state-legal development of Russia in these works is, firstly, in criticizing the Josephite monarchy as not corresponding to Christianity, but in line with the spirit of eastern despotism, in considering the monarchy not at all as something absolutely holy and established by God, but as necessary “Evil”, with certain tasks, without fulfilling which it turns into the center of all evil, and also in substantiating the point of view that the Josephite ideal was far from the only and far from “ideal” as a state construct. Along with it there was a variety of ideas about the state and its role among the population, some of which prevailed in the 1917 Revolution, and the ideals of non-possessiveness are much more consistent with the Christian understanding of the state and law.

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