

**NININS 2020****International Scientific Forum «National Interest, National Identity and National Security»****ISSUES OF RUSSIAN CIVILIZATION IN THE INTERPRETATION  
OF RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY**

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**Abstract**

The article is devoted to the problem of Russian civilization. The domestic philosophical thought at all periods of its development demonstrates an example of understanding the fate of the country in world history. The discourse of this topic leads to the formation of complicated philosophical systems, which form a complex of stable ideas about the peculiarities of the spiritual culture of Russia, ensuring its identity and civilization specificity. The article analyses the views of representatives of Russian religious philosophy on the peculiarities of the spiritual culture of the Russian people in the context of world culture. The authors find out how the thinkers understood the specifics of Russian spiritual culture. Special attention is paid to the problem of justifying the cultural and civilizational identity of Russia. The authors conclude that representatives of Russian religious philosophy consider the peculiarities of the spiritual culture of Russia in the context of the West-East problem. The most important representatives of Russian religious thought focus on the synthesis of higher spiritual ideas, both Western and Eastern, as the basis for the development of a model of Russian civilization. Philosophy of all-unity offers the most productive and relevant solutions to this problem. The intuition of all-unity guides thinkers to form the ideal of harmonious unity in multiplicity. A special place in the assertion of the civilization identity of Russia is currently occupied by the philosophical creativity of the representative of the philosophy of all-unity close to the Eurasian movement of Karsavin.

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## **1. Introduction**

It is impossible to understand the spiritual culture of people without reference to its philosophical tradition. It is even more relevant if such tradition has shown itself in a bright expressed form, leaving an imprint on the history of world culture. Russian philosophy gives us an excellent example of reflection on the topic of the cultural identity of Russia and the Russian people in the context of the world spiritual tradition. Undoubtedly, philosophy in Russia developed under the influence of traditions and achievements of the world and national culture, influencing, in turn, the spiritual searches of the Russian intelligentsia, which was especially evident during the Silver Age. Russian philosophical thought had developed mostly around philosophical-historical problems. Therefore, Russian philosophical thought included many questions in the field of its original research. Meanwhile, the central and in many ways, systemic theme, in our opinion, is the reflection of the peculiarities of the domestic spiritual culture, which allows forming an idea of the civilizational identity of Russia.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problem of determining the civilizational identity of Russia was formed in the field of historiography. This issue is closely connected with the problematic field of ethics, axiology, social philosophy, and anthropology. This problem is often confused with themes of national messianism, social ideal, and Russian idea. In our opinion, despite their proximity, the consideration of the problem of civilizational identity of Russia is a separate task for philosophy, and the understanding of the Messianic vocation, social ideal, and Russian idea is largely derived from its discourse. The problem under consideration includes questions about the relationship of spiritual cultures of the West, East and Russia, about the ideal foundations of Russian spirituality, about the place of Russia in the world-historical process.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the research is the philosophical and historical views of Russian religious thinkers.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The research aimed to analyze the religious thinkers' views on the relationship between the spiritual cultures of the West, East and Russia, on the ideal foundations of Russian spirituality, and the place of Russia in the world-historical process.

## **5. Research Methods**

The methodological basis of this study is a civilizational approach to understanding of historic process. History is considered as the combination of national cultures. Cultures have mutual influence on each other, but their spiritual basis remains independent. This approach doesn't include the idea of united, line, progressive and universal development of all nations and peoples. The authors use the principals of

objectiveness, regularity, historicism, interconnection and development. In this research the following methods are used: comparative-historical, analysis, synthesis, abstraction, generalization, analogy.

## 6. Findings

Many researchers write about the great significance of philosophical understanding of history (in the religious version – philosophy of history) for the formation and development of Russian philosophy itself. The author of the textbook work on the history of Russian philosophy – Zenkovsky (1991) notes: "Russian thought is entirely based on the philosophy of history, it is constantly addressed to questions about the "meaning" of history, the end of history ... This exceptional, we can say, excessive attention to the philosophy of history, of course, is not accidental" (pp. 16–17). The Historical Issues required a deep philosophical justification. They led to the formation of several full-scale philosophical systems that marked the flourishing of Russian philosophical thought in the last third of the nineteenth and early 20th centuries. Speaking of Russian philosophy, we mean, first of all, religious philosophy, based on Christian doctrine in its Orthodox version. Orthodox attitudes linked Russian philosophical thought with the very foundations of the popular spirit. However, our authors using a rich philosophical toolkit developed by the world's intellectual tradition carried out the analysis of these grounds.

Let us try to define the problem, which carries a powerful methodological charge for the folding of ideas about the cultural identity of Russia and the Russian people. The central theme is the problem of "West – Russia – East." The discussion of this theme, in many respects, is based on the domestic philosophy of history. Its relevance to Russian thought has not diminished for centuries. This fact can be explained. During all its history Russia was at the crossroads of cultural and civilizational influences. Many elements of socio-political, economic, spiritual and cultural lifestyle of Russia were formed with direct influence of factors from different sources. Many of these factors have their roots in the West, but the factors formed in the East are not less important. As a result, Russia has developed a specific civilizational unity which is extremely difficult to characterize unambiguously not only from the point of view of foreign researchers but also of domestic authors. In view of western thinkers Russia looked like "East", but for the representatives of Eastern cultures it seemed to be "West". As for the Russian history itself, one can easily find here not only influence but also manifestation of both eastern and western roots. These roots are noticeable not only in the socio-political structure, but also in the spiritual culture. The strongest influence of the western model can be seen in the process of reforms in 18th century. As a result of these significant changes in Russia a whole layer of people with European education was formed. They became bearers of the western culture. These people clearly were the minority of the population, but they held the leading positions in all spheres of public life. A clear contradiction between the lifestyle and mindset of Russian elite and cultural background of the vast majority of the population appeared. It was an inner contradiction of western and eastern roots in the spiritual culture. So, in Russia the preconditions for conceptual comprehension of the "West – East" issue were formed. The objective background is the contradiction of different spiritual traditions. Russian intellectuals that started considering this issue became the leaders of Russian philosophic thought. One of the largest Russian philosophers of the turn of the 19 – 20th centuries Berdyaev spoke about the significance of the West-East problem for the Russian spiritual tradition. He noted that in the process of formulating and solving this problem, Russian national

identity was formed. All Russian spiritual culture, in his opinion, is filled with the struggle of Slavophilism and Zapadnichestvo (Berdyayev, 1911, p. 108). Berdyayev's conclusion that the West-East problem is central to the Russian spiritual tradition seems to us completely true and relevant to the present.

“This topic allows comprehending the features of Russian philosophy, its place in the context of world philosophical thought, the importance for many generations of thinking people, which eventually allow conceptualizing Russia's place in world history, so are the spiritual values that the future holds” (Treushnikov, 2009, par. 2, pp. 3–4). The same analysis allows an understanding of the philosophical justification of Russia's cultural and civilizational identity in Russian religious philosophy.

Even a cursory review of the views of representatives of Russian religious, philosophical thought (advocating for the original path of the historical development of Russia) on the designated problem allows seeing the direction of their spiritual searches. It is quite natural that the philosophical analysis of the theme "West – Russia – East" in the domestic intellectual tradition dates back to the period of ancient Russia. Metropolitan Hilarion demonstrates his approach to this problem in the 11th century in his sermon "Word of Law and Grace." Hilarion contrasted the metaphysical spirit of freedom, truth and love with the spirit of legal slavery. The first was embodied in the single world of Christianity, the second – in the Old Testament Judaism. Hilarion introduced Russ as the heir to the Christian spirit of freedom. In the 16th century, the elder of the Pskovo-Pechersky Monastery, Philofei, contributed to the formation of the problem. In its formulation of the Russian idea, one of the components of the antinomy under consideration "West-East" acquires a concrete embodiment, namely, "East" is consistently identified with Russia – the only custodian of true Orthodoxy in the world. As a result, our author is a supporter of the isolation of the Moscow state. Old Believers in the 17th century, in general, develop the idea of the monk of the Pskovo-Pechersky Monastery "Moscow is the Third Rome." However, their opposition to Russia to the rest of the world is more concrete and realistic. They consider this antinomy as a struggle of metaphysical forces of good and evil and reduced to the household plane. Also, in their work the theme "West-East" gets more or less detailed outlines: Western Europe, it seems to be an expressive "false faith", and Russia is the sole custodian of pure Orthodoxy.

Work of Chaadaev led to the consideration of the topic of cultural and civilizational identity of our country has risen to a qualitatively new philosophical height. First of all, the thinker conceptually formulates the problem of the place and role of the spiritual culture of Russia in world history. The thinker managed to raise the question of Russia's place in the world history with the greatest urgency. He identified the features of eastern and western development, identified the features of these civilizational types. Russia, according to Chaadaev, does not belong to the West or the East. The thinker assessed the contribution of Russia to the world history negatively. He blamed the historical failure of Russian civilization on the Orthodox Church. A way out of the crisis, in his opinion, can be found in following the Western cultural tradition, in abandoning the dominant influence of the Orthodox Church. The reaction to Chaadaev's statements by the official authorities was very sharp. The thinker was persecuted. However, now the influence that he had on the public consciousness of the Russian intellectuals is of greater importance to us. It was in response to the publication of the work of Chaadaev that arose a wide

discussion of the civilizational choice of Russia. During this discussion, the grounds for the heyday of Russian philosophical thought were formed.

Two trends, which are also currently relevant for the national cultural tradition, were developed during the reflection on the topic, which was set by Chaadaev. One of the currents is Zapadnichestvo. Proponents of this direction believed that the historical development of Russia is not fundamentally different from the Western European model. Another course of social and philosophical thought is Slavophilism. In their works, representatives of this direction opposed the Western European cultural tradition to the Russian tradition. They saw Western principles primarily in religious foundations (Catholicism and Protestantism). They presented the foundations of Russian spiritual culture in the form of idealized Orthodoxy. This technique allowed them to conclude that it was necessary to strengthen the Orthodox foundations of Russian civilization and to oppose the influence of Western culture. At the same time, they did not deny the best, developed by Western education.

Thinkers of the second half of the nineteenth century tried to give its philosophical justification. Many researchers consider Danilevsky, an author who completed the philosophical-historical views of Slavophiles in conceptual-land-framed form. It was summarizing the critics' assessments of Danilevsky, the modern researcher Pushkin (1998) concludes: "Obviously, Danilevsky was not a simple popularizer of Slavophile doctrine. Its significance lies primarily in the fact that it has identified the key areas of the historiography of Slavophilism and transformed it into a holistic concept of cultural and historical types" (p. 134). Its concept of cultural and historical types brings the foundations to the idea of the original way of development of Russia. On its basis, it is possible to convincingly prove the negative nature of the European influence on Russia, as the spiritual foundations of Western civilization are fundamentally different from the ideological foundations of Slavic civilization. Also, the theory of cultural and historical types justifies the inevitability of the demise of European civilization and the high messianic purpose of Russia and the Slavs united under its leadership. The role of such a factor as a nationality in Danilevsky's concept is seriously increasing. There is an idea of rehabilitation of peoples who do not fit into the pan-European model of development. Thus, the specificity of the national spiritual culture of Danilevsky is justified in the context of his interpretation of the problem "West-East", determined by the denial of a single history of human social development.

Danilevsky's position, characterized by known naturalism, in its prolongation, sits at odds with universal Christian attitudes. The abandonment of the notion of a single historical process leads to the loss of a single universal ideal. The most significant representatives of Russian philosophical thought criticize the thinker for this: Solovyov and Dostoyevsky. The latter continues the trend laid down by Slavophiles, within the framework of the literary-philosophical direction of "Soilwork", called "pochvennichestvo". Danilevsky is often considered to be a part of "pochvennichestvo". However, there is a significant difference between him and Dostoyevsky. Dostoyevsky is interested, first of all, in the moral improvement of man. At the same time, Dostoyevsky dialectically refracts universal Christian values through the concepts of "soil," "people". Based on this position, Dostoyevsky has a negative attitude towards the Catholic West and its influence on Russia. The thinker can also find the idea of reconciliation between the West and the East, based on the Christian-universalist approach. However, we cannot be sure whether this idea was the final in the work of the thinker, his "testament", as v. for example, Solovyov. The singling

out of an ethnic factor potentially opposing religious ideals has led to several contradictions and difficulties. Leontiev, a supporter of the concept of cultural-historical types, seeking to avoid these contradictions, turns to the religious foundations of Russian civilization. He finds them in Byzantineism. It is based on Byzantine Orthodoxy that Russia's messianic role should be realized. As a result, the idea of Pan-Slavism developed by Danilevsky was buried.

Solovyov sought to overcome extremes in solving our problem. It proceeded from the principle of Christian universalism and held a very peculiar position in the dispute about the historical vocation of Russia and its cultural and civilizational identity. As many researchers rightly noted, it can not be attributed to either Westernizers or Slavophiles; all definitions are very conditional (Losev, 1988, p. 15). As Berdyaev (1911) noted Solovyov is "so great" that solves the West-East problem as Russia's main problem. It is decided based on the principles of Christian universalism, justifying the need to reunite these two worlds into the "Christian all-humanity" – in God-humanity (pp. 107–108).

In his opinion, the Russian people are called upon to commit the feat of national self-denial and bridge the gap between the West and the East. This synthesizing action is the essence of the "Russian idea" in Solovyov's interpretation. This thought develops by the philosopher, as in the works of the "early" period of creativity, (Solovyov, Vol. 1, 1911–1914, p. 227; Solovyov, Vol. 2, 1911–1914, pp. 122–125) and his later works (Solovyov, Vol. 4, p. 3; Solovyov, Vol. 5, 1911–1914, p. 216).

The thinker justifies cultural and civilizational identification of Russia through the prism of the macro-historical rhythm of the struggle of Western and Eastern beginnings in the world spiritual tradition, directed towards the harmonious synthesis of them, the carrier of which is the bearer, Russian people. Russia and the Russian people, Russian statehood (especially in the works of the thinker of the eighties and nineties), that is Russian civilization fulfils the messianic purpose and are considered as a conduit of divine power. At the same time, Christian-universalistic installations lead Solovyov to the actual dissolution of the Russian in the universal, all-human. As a result, the basis for finding unique, excellent qualities of the Russian people is lost; the features of its spiritual culture are dissolved in universal qualities. According to Trubetskoy (1995), the features of the "Russian national face" are lost, while obscuring, at the same time, the features of the universal-Christian ideal (pp. 69–70). The large-scale philosophical justification of the specifics of Russian culture and civilization, meanwhile, does not provide the validity of the approval of The Messianic Purpose of Russia.

Solovyov is the founder of the philosophical school of unity. Belonging to the philosophy of unity, however, does not prejudge a clear solution to our problem. For example, the ideological followers of Solovyov: Florensky and Bulgakov, having witnessed catastrophic events, the onset of which Solovyov foreboded, otherwise consider the purpose of Russia. The world war and the Russian revolutions of the early 20th century destroyed in the minds of Florensky and Bulgakov the idea of the messianic role of Russia. These authors are more preoccupied with the themes of preserving the spiritual potential of the people and revitalizing their spiritual life. In the metaphysical justification of their provisions, they are guided by the intuitions of the ideological founder of this direction, but when analyzing Russian history adheres to the position of authors of the Slavophil direction. They represented the opposing culture of the Western model of the New Age as an ideal and a task. At the same time, Florensky is mainly an apologist

of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Bulgakov is a supporter of Christian religiosity without a clear confessional affiliation.

At the same time, Berdyaev, in his work, does not abandon the idea inherent in Russian religious philosophy – the idea of Russian messianism. He interprets it based on the principle of Christian universalism: like Solovyov, Berdyaev considers Russia as a synthetic force that should unite East and West. At the same time, Berdyaev's work is a vivid testament to overcoming the extremes of Chaadaev's nihilism and the idealization of Slavophilism. His dedicated antinomianism of Russian history and Russian spiritual culture perfectly reflects the peculiarities of Russia's historical development. However, it is not supported by a sufficient philosophical justification of its cultural and civilizational features.

Perhaps the last conceptual attempt to build a model of the self-present historical development of our country was made within the framework of Eurasianism. Authors belonging to this direction, in the new historical conditions, repelled in their constructions from the known antinomy "West-East." Russia was presented as a cultural and ethnic unity with unique, distinctive qualities. There was a clear tendency to integrate with the Eastern peoples while maintaining a reasonably clear demarcation and dislike of Western culture.

It should be noted that the Eurasian philosophy of history allows including in the context of a single Russian cultural and civilizational community and non-Christian "Eastern" elements present in the national history and culture. This aspect was peripheral for most representatives of Russian religious philosophy (excluding, perhaps, in part, Leontiev). Meanwhile, the modern Russian consciousness requires a philosophical justification for integrated identification for a multi-religious and multi-ethnic community. This justification is given within the framework of the Eurasian philosophy of history.

The most philosophical and historical justification of the Eurasian model was given by the representative of the philosophy of unity – Karsavin. With Eurasianism as a political current, it was associated with complex relations of "attraction-repulsion", but in the philosophical field, he is the ideologue of this trend, despite a rather brief period of fascination with this direction. It is thanks to the contribution of Karsavin that we can talk about the in-depth philosophical development of the basic ideologist of Eurasian teaching. They were built based on the intuition of unity, perceived by the thinker as a representative of this direction.

During the Eurasian period of his work (approximately from 1926 to 1929), the thinker continued to develop the basic ideas already expressed by him. The foundation of the Eurasian doctrine is his doctrine of the symphonic personality, which acquires all-encompassing significance (Karsavin, 2003). Russia-Eurasia, as a particular civilization acts as a personal manifestation of unity, possessing a "collective-single worldview" (Karsavin, 1995, p. 137), includes in turn peoples and social groups and individuals. In this harmonious unity of the cathedral subject, there are personal forms in which the existence of "people's and popular unity" is realized. These forms are the church and the state. (Karsavin, 1992, p. 13) The model of Karsavin thus contains a philosophical justification for the individual cultural and civilizational identity of Russia, formed based on a single statehood and the Russian Orthodox Church, interacting (ideally) in symphonic unity. The philosophical justification of the cultural and civilizational unity of "Russia-Eurasia," which is given in his works, allows asserting without significant

contradictions the ideal of harmonious multi-ethnic and multi-religious unity, which was and is currently Russia.

## 7. Conclusion

Russian religious and philosophical thought shows a rather wide range of views on the problem of the identity of Russian civilization. Christian universalists' attitudes push our thinkers to recognize their spiritual intimacy with Christian peoples. However, the Orthodox roots that determine the bases of their spiritual searches lead to the domination of ideas about Russia's unique historical path. We believe that the most productive philosophical concept justifying the identity of Russian civilization at the moment is Eurasian. The attention of Eurasians to the problems of statehood is naturally derived from the politicization of Eurasianism itself. This circumstance strengthens the civilizational aspect of our problem, makes it possible to include diverse elements, which differ in confessional affiliation in a single harmonious whole, thus forming an original cultural and civilizational community with its specific self-identification. The historiosophy of Eurasians is currently the most productive philosophical and historical doctrine. Without significant contradictions, the historiosophy allows justifying the cultural and civilizational identity of Russia.

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