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Russian culture as a civilizational phenomenon: aspect of values

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the understanding of the Russian culture as a phenomenon of Eastern Christian civilization. The author analyzes the main historical stages of the formation of the Russian culture in its interrelation with religion, worldview and social political life of the corresponding period against the background of substantial facts, principally based on the Russian literature and philosophy. Proceeding from the principled diagram of civilization as a concentric system of social casings, located around the religious valuables kernel, the author keynotes the continuity of the country's cultural code despite the revolutionary shifts in time, irrespective of the existence of the Peter the Great Western-like reform, February or October coup d'état in 1917 or collapse of the USSR late in XX century. The basic methodological categories of the given analysis are the paradigms of the classical, modernist and post modernist style as integral features of history and theory of the Russian Orthodox civilization on the whole, starting from Baptizing of the Russ and ending with the contemporary crucial stage of its existence. The principled attention is drawn towards the general European and world context, which take place in this country's culture and which on the one hand are an aspect of the global ideological development, and on the other are the unique creative acts of our centuries-old tradition. In this aspect this country' spiritual culture with all its worldwide nature (Dostoevsky F.M.), early XXI century is becoming a kind of an alternative for a post modernist destruction of a man's image as an integral being. The utmost expression of the latter are the trans humanistic tendencies in the "decline of Europe", threatening to turn Homo Sapiens into an artificial cyborg.

Keywords: civilization, culture, art, orthodoxy, revolution, classical, modern, postmodern, Russia, trans humanism

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Introduction

A battle is being waged in the contemporary world, a war of civilizations in certain sense. By using a metaphor, we can say that the concept of clashes of civilizations used by S. Huntington (Huntington 2003) won the victory over the utopian forecast made by F. Fukuyama (Fukuyama 2007) regarding the liberal end of history. For its part, not a single

world religion promises milk rivers in the jelly banks at the end of the history. What is meant, as a rule, is if not the completion of the historical process as a whole, but at least of one of its cycles. As far as philosophy, sociology and cultural studies are concerned, when time passes, the degree of their theoretical optimism, undoubtedly lowers down. Let us recall the descending line of the German thought, for example from Leibniz with his "best of the worlds" through to Nietzsche with his "death of the God" and Heidegger with his "oblivion of being". It is sufficient today to take any newspaper, where "red lines" are described and are submitted to each other by the world civilizations in order to make sure of the crisis of the existing world order, both in theory and in practice. East or West, North or South are competing now within the framework of multi polar world, and this contest is the continuation of their history by other means. The modernity is disclosed before us as a field of clashes of social cultural platforms-main lands, having centuries long history and developing, as a rule, according to their inner laws. The attention for these laws is not only opportune, but needed. Though we'll never learn them to the end, - they are the crux of the "causality from freedom", but it is no less important to have the possibility of the principled judgment, than to be aware, for example what is the aim of a human's life: each large civilization is the same meaningful uniqueness as each personality.

Materials and methods

In more general sense, civilization - is a means and product of human existence, which possesses spiritual and valuable integrity and which realizes itself socially and materially within long time in the history. In the center of civilization there is a religious linguistic kernel, a key vertical of faith, having roots in the initial genesis (Kazin 2020) and a language, spoken by people to communicate with each other. Around this kernel there are civilizational casings, the first one is culture, ensemble of conceptions of the given civilization about good and evil, truth and lie, beauty and ugliness: world outlook, morality, art. Then follows society itself with its communicative implementations of real values of civilization, as well as their technical (technological) projections at the level of targeted activity. It is clear already from these definitions, that outer surrounding of civilization, culture in particular, may go far from the center towards periphery and even contradict to it. In this sense the history of any civilization appears before us as a dramatic interaction between its sacred (existential) and social cultural (humanistic) facets, - from symbolic God-likeness in the classics through to theomachy challenge in the late modernity. In particular the main events in the Russian creative and social life is nothing else but, fetters of defense of religious ontological (classical) kernel of this country culture from the burden of modernity, and then post modernity, through to the present day. We will try to consider a number of significant stages of the country's history under the offered philosophical angle, bearing it in mind that life is always broader than a diagram, though on the other hand there is nothing more practical than a good theory.

Results

Christian classics

The specifics of the Russian great way within the long time space is determined by the fact that Russia is not just a Christian country, but the only one, after the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire, a super ethnic Orthodox country-civilization, occupying more than a third of the Eurasian continent. There are not so many countries-civilizations in the contemporary world: Russia, China, India, USA, Israel. We are neither Europe nor Asia – we are Russia. This was the issue that has been understood by the most sympathetic people. A.S. Pushkin, the Russian European offspring, was quite clear about it:

Russia has never had anything in common with the rest of Europe; its history requires a different idea, another formula.¹

This way or another, mindful of the whole sharpness of the assertion, it was upheld by almost all the artists and thinkers in Russia, who added to the glory of this fame in the world – Pushkin, Gogol, Chaadaev, Kirievsky, Khomyakov, Tutchev, Danilevsky, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Rozanov, Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Tikhomirov, Ilyin, Frank, Florensky, Florovsky, Savitsky, Trubetzky, Losev, Gumilyov, Pananin and many others. According to a great poet, diplomat and geopolitician Fedor Ivanovich Tutchev, “Russia is first of all a Christian empire. The Russian people is Christians not only because of their Christian persuasions, but also thanks to something more delicate, than persuasions. A Russian is a Christian due to his potential for selfless and self-sacrifice deeds, which makes the foundation of his morale nature. Revolution is above all is an enemy of Christianity”²

By revolution, Tyutchev understood the general strategy of the new European (Modernist) history in general, which forgets God for the sake of man. The Eastern Church and culture have never trusted a solitary (the only one of this kind) human experience. A cathedral is in the center of the religious experience and creative practice of Orthodoxy. According to the definition made by A. S. Khomyakov, the truth is inaccessible to individual consciousness. This requires a Church that

is not a multitude of persons in their personal separateness, but a unity God’s grace, living in a multitude of intelligent creatures that submit to grace³.

Since envoys of Prince Vladimir visited Sofia Tzargrad and conveyed the news about the beauty of the Christian liturgy (common prayer) the Christian Russia kept resisting the Roman Catholic and later Protestant differentiation of the spiritual act according to “points of view”, “discourses”, etc. Apophaticism and hesychasm – the divine mystery and the meaningful silence-have turned out to be more important for a Russian monk, an icon-

1 Pushkin A.S. Collected works in ten volumes. M., 1982. V. 6. P. 415–416.

2 Tutchev F.I. Russia and revolution // Collected works. Tutchev F.I. Verses and political articles. SPB, 1900. P. 475.

3 Same.

painter, thinker and artist than the most obvious (logically forced) proofs of God's presence at the level of existing being. The golden "onion-shaped" dome of the Orthodox church is the architectural emblem of the communion in the light of the Most Holy Trinity - a quiet concord in love, in contrast to the anthropocentric will of Roman-Gothic sharp-angled spires. Andrey Rublev's "Trinity" is a silent counselling of three angels, where a word is identical to silence as the eternal accomplishment of truth: "already-but-not-yet".

The whole history of Kiev, Moscow, St. Petersburg and partly even of the Soviet Russia is filled with the desire to retain this unity from being disintegrated, to preserve the vertical tension of culture, to avoid any simulation - sometimes even at the cost of abandoning culture as such. Culture (including art) - this is, how it was noted above, is just one of the casings of civilization, the kernel of which is faith and language - in our case, the Orthodox faith and the Russian language of the Church Slavonic root. Once, Peter Chaadaev⁴ and the Marquis de Custine⁵ keynoted the artificial manner of the European image of St. Petersburg Russia, calling it the empire of facades. Being masters of criticism of historical masks, they were right: the Orthodox consciousness relies on the fact that it is better to lose one's freedom in God than to keep it untouched for Satan.

Perhaps, this manifested clearly in Pushkin, whose creative endeavor would become a challenge to his own sinful genius. The whole poetic and personal destiny of Pushkin can be understood as a path to the truth together with his characters and readers - through communication with them in love.

In general, the phenomenon of Pushkin alongside the phenomenon of Seraphim of Sarov and the victory of 1812 over the crowned bourgeois revolution in the person of Napoleon, saved Russia from Westernized rational and legal destruction of man for at least for whole of the century. Imperial Petersburg, with its regular perspectives and facades designed on the curves patterns by Leblona, of course, took the upper hand - but even on the banks of the magnificent Neva, the Copper Horseman chased a little man in spite of, rather than owing to secular society decency, and Nose was walking along the Nevsky prospect as if he had been doing it for the whole of his life. The much praised realism of the classical Russian literature is actually communication with spirits - that is the very thing where parallel lines, according to Dostoevsky, converge (although for a short-sighted human eye this is only a deception of vision).

However, the Holy Russ built its third capital on the same sacred foundations that followed after Kiev and Moscow: Peter the Great could not change there anything with all his splendid assemblies. Of course, on the sociological plane, Russia remained exactly hierarchic society, where not only any station master, but a writer (for instance, chamberlain Pushkin) was legally meaningless before the Tzar. However in relation to the mystical vertical, both the former and the later and some third one, turned out to be absolutely equal, moreover they communicated with each other in the cathedral at the Communion cup. It would not be a great mistake to say that cataclysm of 1917 in the final

⁴ Chaadaev P.Y. Complete collected works and selected letters in 2 volumes. M.: Nauka, 1991.

⁵ Kustin A. Russia in 1839 / translated from French. In 2 volumes. M.: Publishing House named after the Sabashnikov, 1996. 528 p.

count was brought about by the need for truth, requested by people, that actually was deprived by the metaphysical place on earth under the pressure from capital ("yellow devil"). The point here, of course, is not the ideology of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, as such, and not the attempts of masonic apprentices, but the issue is about "joy-suffering" (according to A. Blok), which are one in essence, and without which life in Russia is a pleasure to no one, be it three times as free and comfortable. The council of the Orthodox Russian civilization had developed a crack earlier than the Moscow Christ Savior Cathedral was blasted, but still about five hundred years later than Europe advanced the teaching of humanism on its sacred stones. Standing in intercession before the Almighty costs a lot – one who is beaten is to be exchanged for two who are not beaten. The word "comrade" is closer to a Christian "brother" than esteemed mister, courtly sir, or postmodernist "other". In any case we do not have the shaped any neutral space between man and God, where anthropocentric ("Faustian") technologies are comfortably placed, and where it is so pleasant to live. The absence of civilized "buffer zone" in Russia is its main difference both from the Western 'open society' with its cult of economic man and from the Eastern swarm-like tradition, where preservation of canon, ritual are the main things in the order of regulated concern. In this sense Russia is really the Last Kingdom (Kazin 1998).

Russian modernist style project

Anyway, Christian history did not end with Peter the Great. Looking ahead let's make it a note that it did not end with Lenin. However after Peter the Great Russ as if had divided into two: East and West, God and Man and man-God encountered each other on the foggy streets of the capital on the Neva. Over the two centuries the Petersburg Russia accumulated great tension between content and form, between "what and how" was being implemented in the country. Starting from the faithful play of words in the name (Lotman, Uspensky 1982) and finishing with "the last days of the imperial power" ⁶, St. Petersburg was leading its tragic imperialism to a revolutionary denouement, in which eschatological features were already clearly visible.

I will not repeat here the well-known deliberation sketchers of the authors of the "VEKHI" collection (1909), which had traced the mystery of the transformation of the social-democratic European doctrine of the well-being settlement of earthly existence (i.e., in fact, of adaptation to sin as the norm of existence) into the Russian dream of world salvation.

"The Russian spirit is thoroughly religious. He doesn't really know any other values than religious ones", – that was written by one of the authors of VEKHI, S. L. Frank (Frank 1992) in the 1930-s, who had already had experience of revolutionary and post-revolutionary events. Throughout the entire history of St. Petersburg Russia, the desire to live "not as one wants, but as God commands" united Slavophiles and Westerners, materialists and idealists, monarchists and narodniks. From the interpretation of the peasant community as the embryo of domestic socialism, through the appeals for a popular uprising led by

6 Blok A. Last days of the Imperial power. // Collected works.: Vol. 8, M.-L., 1962. V. 6.

“critically thinking individuals” to the cult of the raw-earth-Mother and the God-bearing peasant, all this entered the field of consciousness (and even more subconsciously) of the Russian intelligentsia as of its natural elements, so to speak.

Thus, according to its history and its spiritual structure, Russia has experienced and implemented what in the West, in the better sense, was the subject of speculative constructions and salon conversations. The Russian culture of the Silver Age, saw a paradoxical fusion of basic religious and historical values – and above all, the idea of a righteous existence (in its popular and intellectual versions) – with the claims of pragmatic usage of this existence, which came from the West, up to its radical alteration. It was at the point of this fusion that the “Russian Christ” became close to St. Petersburg myth, the image of the chosen people – with the proletariat-the messiah, Karl Marx – with the Old Testament prophets and Friedrich Nietzsche. As St. John of Kronstadt said on the eve of the revolution,

Russia is forged by troubles and misfortunes. It is not in vain that He who governs all nations, with skill and accuracy, lays on His anvil all those who are subjected to His mighty hammer. Be strong, Russia! But repent, pray, and weep bitter tears before your Heavenly Father, Whom you have greatly angered!..⁷.

In any case, classical Christian culture prevailed in Russia until 1917, and the Silver Age, with its decadent liberalism and aestheticism, did not change this fateful position as a whole. At the same time, after February and October, we entered a period of active socialist experiment, when a collective person (party, class) was placed in the semantic center of culture by means of revolutionary violence, replacing of God. This fundamental antinomy – a secret religious nucleus and a theomachy ideological interpretation-permeates the entire culture of the Soviet period from bottom to top, from 1917 to 1991. From Alexander Blok’s great poem “The Twelve” (that Russian apocalypse) to the novels by Valentin Rasputin, the music of Georgy Sviridov, and the films of Andrey Tarkovsky, the attentive observers are confronted with the constant – though mostly deep in subtext – struggle for Christ in secular Russian culture. Along with it, the struggle against Christ was equally persistent in Soviet times – from the “Black Square” (this icon of non-existence) by the “Commissioner for Arts” Kazimir Malevich to the “necrorealism” of some opuses of late Soviet art’s cinema. Let us single out – rather conditionally, of course, several main stages of this struggle.

From Bellicose Communism to “the Red Emperor”

Soviet power began, as is known, with the Red Terror against the religion, statehood, history and culture of the Russian people. Already in January 1917, a decree was issued on the separation of church from state and school from church. As for the clergy themselves, the well-known instructions were issued by Lenin stating that the more representatives of the reactionary clergy are shot, the better. As early as in 1913, Lenin wrote to Gorky that

⁷ Russia before the Second Advent. Materials for the Essay on the Russian eschatology. M., 1993. P. 255

any flirtation with bozhenka (God) was an unspeakable abomination⁸. After the victorious revolution, in 1923, the wife of the leader Krupskaya, who led the people's "enlightenment" campaign, ordered to withdraw from the libraries the works written by many of the greatest Russian writers. Most representatives of classical Russian art (as opposed to modernists) emigrated abroad at that time (Bunin, Shmelev, Rachmaninoff, Shaliapin, and others), and Orthodox philosophers and scholars were sent to Germany on board of a "philosophical steamer". The International Communists found a country that they did not feel sorry about, considering it as a bundle of firewood for the fire of the world revolution.

However, from about 1935, the situation began to change. Abandoning the utopia of "without Russians, without Latvians to live as a single human community"⁹, the fiery revolutionaries-the destroyers of the Empire were gradually turning into national Bolsheviks (or were replaced by them). Even in the early 1920-ies, Smenovekhivites and Eurasians noted the national aspect of Bolshevism. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet power, N. A. Berdyaev wrote about national communism as a transformed form of the idea of Sobornaya Pravda in his famous book "The Origins and Meaning of the Russian Communism" (Berdyaev 1990). For his part, Nikolai Kluev, a poet and an Old Believer directly stated:

There is a Kerzhensky spirit in Lenin,
Abbot's shout in the decree..¹⁰.

It is precisely this aspect of Bolshevism that, in our opinion, Stalin brought to the fore. Stalin's coup in Soviet ideology and culture is in some respects comparable to Peter's civilizational revolution, although Peter looked to the West, and Stalin, on the contrary, to the East. Was it by chance or not, the young Josef Dzhughashvili studied at a theological seminary – God knows, but his thinking turned out to be different from that of belonging to the Leninist-Trotskyists. Being the same "demon of the revolution" as they were, Stalin began to operate with other state-type categories. Terror, of course, continued, but already under the sovereign banners. By the end of the 1930-ies, the former revolutionary militant became, in our opinion, a sole dictator, and a little later – generalissimo and "red emperor". The "trick of history" is most obvious here: as the leader of the revolutionary vanguard, Stalin undoubtedly carried out a modernist social project, but willingly or unwittingly, he actualized one of the hidden driving forces of this project – the classical Russian cathedral-monarchical tradition (Solonevich 1991)¹⁷. This, by the way, is the difference between Stalin and Napoleon, the crowned general of the French bourgeois Revolution.

But no matter how it was, in 1934, history classes were resumed at schools, and history departments in universities were reopened. Literature, music, theater, painting, cinema began acquiring a more familiar look to be digested by the national consciousness. For

⁸ Lenin V.I.A letter to Gorkey, dated 14. 11.1913 // Complete collected works. M.: Gospolitizdat, 1958. T. 48. P. 226.

⁹ Maykovsky V.V. To comrade Nette, a ship and a man. // Maykovsky V.V. Collected works, V.2. M.: Khudozestvennaya literatura, 1973. P. 69.

¹⁰ Nikolai Kluev. There is kerzhensky spirit in Lenin. URL: <https://www.culture.ru/poems/39459/est-v-lenine-kerzhenskii-dukhn>

example, the production of blasphemous “Warrior” by D. Bedny was banned, at the same time Stalin personally attended the performances of the “Days of the Turbins” (the White Guardsman story) by M. Bulgakov more than ten times. The Meyerhold theater suffered a lot as well as Meyerhold himself, and then Klyuev, Pilnyak, Mandelshtam, and many others followed the way. However, we saw the creative works by Prokofiev and Shostakovich, Sholokhov and Pasternak, Korin, Deineka and Plastov. A landmark event in changing the ideological landscape was the celebration of Pushkin’s centenary in 1937, and then Alexander Nevsky by Eisenstein was released on the screens, with its general theme of the Russian patriotism. The magazine “Bezbozhnik” (Heathen) ceased to exist in 1941 (together with the society of the same name). In September 1943, Stalin invited church hierarchs to come to the Kremlin, those few who were still alive at that time. The result of this meeting was the restoration of the Orthodox Patriarchate in the USSR in its full membership. At about the same time, A. Alexandrov’s song, glorifying the Great Russ, that closed ranks of the union of republics, became the Soviet anthem instead of the International. All this was done mainly because of the tactical political and military considerations. However, no matter whether you like it or not, nationalistic Bolsheviks pulled Russia from the swamp, into which the riotous liberals and socialists (“pharmacists”, as Blok ironically dubbed them) had dragged it in February of 1917. What is more, there were neither colonies nor magic sources of oil, everything that had to be done was based on enthusiasm, fear and slave labor. When pondering over the Soviet history of the 1930-ies through to 1950-ies we should resolutely reject both Stalinism in the sense of “personality cult” and pathological anti-Stalinism within the outlook of the “kitchen-sitting style” dissidence. Unfortunately, there were no other historic and cultural forces in Russia that could have carried out the recreation of the country after the February revolutionary pogrom by other, more humane means, – without mentioning Christian potential. We must clearly understand that we, people living in the twenty-first century, we owe our present existence to those “Soviet” people who voted for the Stalinist constitution in 1936 and saved the bourgeois Europe in 1945 from squashing Jewish, Slavic and other ethnic racial issues at the cost of their lives. They were the same folk, the same people. Those people were the source of admiration for Ivan Bunin, the author of the counterrevolutionary “Cursed Days”, welcoming a Soviet officer publically in the Paris theater. And Berdyaev, the philosopher of “freedom and inequality” raised a red banner above his house in Klamar. But they did not return to their motherland.

The Russian miracle of the XX century lies in the fact the philosophical and political revolutionary modernity in the Orthodox country has turned out in the final count, to be the ideological casing (converted form) of quite a different valuable content. Despite the Satanist policy of internationalist-communists with their Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist theory of the world revolution laying at the base of it, the precious Christian kernel of the country’s literature, music, art, theatre was not lost, rather it preserved itself like the town of Kitezh when the Mongols approached. Not the whole of the Third Rome became the Third International, though it raised its banners. Alongside the colossal anti-Christian/anti-Russian intimidation, the country’s writers and painters of the Soviet period grasped not only the class music in the noise and fury of their epoch. Being officially atheistic and

even, at first, belligerently heathen-like, the soviet culture was bordering on its spiritual ontological depth on the secret Christian hope, very often not recognizable as such by ether authorities or by readers, viewers, listeners, or even by the artists themselves.

We are doomed to failure when we judge about the soviet history and culture using the formal principle “black-white” (Kazin 2010). In 1945 the “Red Sovdepia” became Soviet Russia and won the victory over the most terrifying anti-Christian and anti-national force, which had ever been dragged over Russ by cult-driven Nordic Reich. And in 1961 a guy from Smolensk Yuri Gagarin by name, was the first one who was launched into the space. The Soviet culture and the whole civilization under the name of USSR turned to be russified in the large measure and, and in 1960-ies-1980-ies it could have definitely become the national civilization and culture.

Mythology of “thaw” and “stagnation”

Unfortunately, it did not happen. Moreover, in the late 1950-ies and early 1960-ies, the policy of “returning to Leninist norms of party, social and cultural life” was proclaimed by Nikita Khrushchev, which in fact meant a return to the epoch of extreme national nihilism and anti-religious way of the Trotskyist type. By bringing GULAG prisoners back from prison camps and granting the creative intelligentsia some freedom, Khrushchev, at the same time, imposed such persecutions of the Russian Orthodox Church which were very similar to Lenin’s ones in their scope. Priests, however, were no longer physically killed. But, at the turn of the 1950-ies and 1960-ies, thousands of churches across the country were closed by order of the Secretary General, and church education was nearly stopped. Against the background of success in space, Khrushchev promised to show the last priest on television. At the same time, official Soviet publications blamed modernism, and Khrushchev staged his famous scandals related to modernist painting exhibitions¹¹.

There were also more serious actions. In the 1960-ies, the manifestos by the honored Marxist M. A. Lifshits appeared under the titles “Why am I not a modernist?” (Lifshitz, Reinhardt, 1968) and the “Crisis of Ugliness” (Lifshitz, Reinhardt 2009). These reports contained quite a lot of truth, except for the main thing - the refusal to recognize Marxism-Leninism as one of the key trends of modernity as a type of consciousness. Modernity, as we have seen above, is the principle of constructing the world out of man, reducing the first to the second. Modernity – is man-centrism: man = God. And if “there is no object without a subject,” then doesn’t it matter who is that subject – a separate human consciousness or, for example, class consciousness, group consciousness and etc.?

Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism and the “proletarian” mythology generated by them, were, in fact, the same product of modernity as, say, liberalism or extreme nationalism – only the subjects here are different. The Russian Revolution and the entire subsequent history of the Soviet power are the history of social cultural modernity, just as the history of the American bourgeois myth or the European-nationalist myth (Italian, German, Spanish,

¹¹ Visit to the avant-gardist exhibition by Khrushchev // URL: <https://photochronograph.ru/2014/02/05/poseshhenie-xrushchyovym-vystavki-avangardistov/>

Portuguese). Joseph Stalin tried, however, to rely on other forces in his policy – including religious ones -but this inevitably acquired a half-baked character.

The indicated above spiritual links were not understood categorically (and if they were understood, they were rejected) by the people belonging to the so-called “Sixties” who dominated the culture during the “thaw”. They sincerely considered themselves to be advanced intellectuals, opposing the monster of totalitarian power, without admitting, at the same time, the idea of their own genetic kinship with it. They sang Okudzhava’s songs about “commissars in dusty helmets,” as if forgetting about where Russia had been driven to because of the deeds of these same commissars, who turned the national war into a class genocide of the people. They extolled the creative works of the avant-gardists of the early twentieth century, without paying attention to the fact that many avant-gardists of the first third of the twentieth century were active supporters of the Russian revolution. (“your word, Comrade Mauser”). Destroying the foundations of the traditional Russian Orthodox monarchy, the avant-gardists went to the end in their destruction, giving rise in reality to such “turbid faces” that they could not even be imagined in a dream (except what Dostoevsky saw in “Demons”). As a wise man G. P. Fedotov wrote in his time, Picasso and Stravinsky in art are the same as Lenin and Mussolini in politics (Fedotov 1990).

Of course, by 1970-ies-1980-ies of the twentieth century, the acute nature of these definitions had been erased. The Soviet superpower was rapidly becoming bourgeois. Former “engineers of human souls” “asked in novels and on the screen about” what is happening to us? “and praised selfless idealists, but in practice the dilemma” art or conscience “was steadily shifting towards art. Genius is allowed to do everything - these are the typically modernist slogans of the Soviet “educated class” of the 1960-ies. The figure of the then “king of poets” Eugeny Yevtushenko is very typical in this regard. He started in 1952 calling Stalin his “best friend”¹², he then spent his entire life exposing the “heirs of Stalin”. Voznesenski did much the same thing, starting with a poem about Lenin and ending with a confession that “seven selves live in him.” They were talented people, but their social cultural horizon, as a rule, did not go beyond the limits of liberal clichés. Already in the next generation, they received, as payback, a total postmodern performance, in which modernity itself became the subject of a parody (“papa’s cinema”).

At the same time, the 1960-ies and 1980-ies have remained in the history of the Russian culture as one of its most fruitful periods. It was at that time when A. Tvardovsky’s “Beyond the Distance” was published and “Doctor Zhivago” was written by Pasternak (“the lyrical epic” of a believing poet), the best works of G. Sviridov, V. Gavrilin, A. Schnittke were composed, great films were shot by G. Chukhrai, A. Tarkovsky, S. Bondarchuk, V. Shukshin. A. Solzhenitsyn worked hard –, despite all the controversial nature of his concepts. The so-called “village” (and in fact, Orthodox) prose and poetry flourished – works by Astafiev, V. Belov, E. Nosov, B. Rasputin, N. Rubtsov. In the person of the “derevenshikov” (belonging to a village) a Russian peasant, seemingly humiliated already in the XX century, took a pen, –

12 Evtushenko E. Secret agents of the future, 1952: «I know: I see the future around, my best friend in the world is leaning over the working table in Kremlin» // Evtushenko E. Collected works. V.1. M.: ЭКСМО, 2014. P.12

what a pen! (etymologically a peasant is – a Christian). A poet is in fact, means more than a poet.

Modernity as a choice

In the XXI century, the postmodern world is stuffed with multicolored manifestations – “orange”, “yellow”, “pink”, “blue”, “black”, “white” “and” red”. No tradition, no nation, no gender, no Fatherland. Rationalism (and even more post-rationalism) – the self-sufficient finite human intellect - does not distinguish between values. As Dostoevsky brilliantly foresaw,

freedom, free mind and science will lead them into such a jungle, and set before such miracles and insoluble mysteries, that some of them, unruly and ferocious, will exterminate themselves, others, rebellious but are weak, will destroy one another, and the third ones, the rest, weak and unhappy, will crawl to our feet and cry out to us: “Yes, you were right, you alone possess the secret, and we return to you, save us from ourselves¹³.

This is not civilization, but barbarism. And barbarism secondary, post-civilizational. This is not just a matter of multinational corporations removing any boundaries – from geographical to moral ones for the sake of their capital. In fact, in the XXI century, we are confronted with a global culture of evil that the free bearers of Luciferian choice in history create by their own will, whether they realize it or not. Anti-Christian civilization (anti-church) has entered a Gedeonistic phase today, foreshadowing in the foreseeable future a Gnostic “culture of death”, and the flames over the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris which is not it’s the only symbol.

As for Russia, everything is still ahead. Of course, culture in general and art in particular are only facets, sides of a single whole which is named Russian civilization. The main danger that threatens Russia is not from outside, but from within: if capital is in possession of power, then everything is allowed. Dollar that flooded into the country in 1991 tramples everything superfluous like a roller for the sake of its benefit – both in the spirit and in the body of the nation. The outstanding issue is whether we can restore such a cultural, state and economic order, where our shortcomings (in terms of a “Euclid” market ratio) would turn out to become merits, or advantages, owing to which Russia, would probably avoid the Western paradox when power is weakness, knowledge is a threat, freedom is slavery of sin. The point is not so much in the clashes of civilizations but in the potential of the Russian civilization to offer a real alternative to the world to “war of all against all”.

We have all chances to do this if our political and cultural elite would finally become self-sufficient and would understand that it is wittingly despairing to copy alien (and, moreover, hopeless) social patters and it is opportune to elaborate national culture based

¹³ Dostoevsky F.M. The Karamazov brothers / Complete collected works in 30 volumes. V. 14. L.,1976. P.235.

on its own code of civilization – the experience of a common cause, which existed in the Realm of Moscow, and in the Empire of St. Petersburg, and under the Soviet power. You don't have to invent anything, you just have to listen to yourself.

In order to overcome the demonization of life imposed on it, Russia must first of all firmly adhere to its traditional hierarchy of values, which (contrary to a profane view) has not disappeared anywhere, but continues to be stored in the archetype of the people's soul. At the cultural level Russia needs a vertical hierarchy of values that underpin national education, art, and science.

Woe to those, who call evil good, and good evil; who regard darkness as light, and light as darkness, who regard bitter things as sweet, and sweet things as bitter!¹⁴

Our national creative act (religious, political, artistic) is directed to the absolute Personality, and not to the impersonal “one” (as in the East) or to ourselves (as in the West). Let us repeat – this time as a conclusion: Russia constantly resolves the paradoxes of the believing mind, the moral poet, and the cathedral monarch. Russian culture wants to be (classic), not just to have (modernism) or seem (postmodernism). Even in modern conditions, the powerful and cultural ontology in our country changes its sacred identity with difficulty, whether it is an imitation of a bourgeois republic, or some kind of decorative monarchy, or outright “seven-bankers” status with capital abroad. Civil society (in Russian – “zemlya”, “earth”) in our country, is always in a tension between the vertical of church-state discipline and the horizontal of egoistic self-assertion. It is important to prevent it from becoming an open Satanism, which, as humanistic progress develops, becomes more and more manipulative with the help of television, Internet and other means of modeling the current state of the world.

Conclusions

Summing up, I would note the following. A Russian person needs lofty culture and a strong state not because he is a “slave” (as Russophobes believe) but because deep in his heart he wants to serve something higher than delight and comfort. The state should not seek to turn life into a paradise, but it is obliged to protect people from the involvement of the dark (grassroots) energies. Paradise on earth is an invention of the ideologists of New European progress, starting with the Reformed Church and Enlightenment (the philosophy of liberal hedonism). The West believed in these fairy tales, essentially ceasing to be a Christian part of the world (the country of the “happy end”). Russia, for its part, still has been living with the idea that power and culture in the country should come not from the desires of a jaded “lonely crowd”, and not from certain “elites”, but from God. Despite the efforts of all sorts of engineers and bricklayers of human souls, the country still remembers that blessed are those who are exiled for the truth. Russian Westerners (“internal emigrants”) should not

14 Ref. 5, 20–21.

hope for the rapid – or not so rapid – transformation of the Russian people into a European “political nation”. As different from the West, which has basically already taken shape (postmodern), and as different from the East, and it, in a certain sense, does not need to be defined (the ritual is always equal to itself), Russia as the middle civilization of the continent, combining the dynamics of Europe and Central Asia in itself, is constantly in need to make a fateful choice between ascent and descent, between classics, modern and postmodern. Russia is likely to find a place in the new multipolar (“post-COVID”) world, especially if India and China helped it to do so. Perhaps it is for this reason that we are still an alternative to the “civilization of the evening” (Abendsland), which is now rapidly rushing into a trans humanistic hell.

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