

## Russian Philosophy – Topic No.15

### RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

The founder of the Russian Philosophy was Ilarion – who was the clergyman. In his book – “Sermon on Law and Grace” (XI century) he tried to generalize the role of the Russian people in the world history. That was the package of ideas developed in the Russian Philosophy through the XII – XVII centuries. By the XVIII century the ideas of Enlightenment had paved the way as a mix of ideas of the religious humanism of the ancient times and Reformation.

Russian philosophy is of course a part of the world philosophy with the obvious some unique elements that make it different. Tracing the difference with the rational Western philosophy it was mentioned that the Russian philosophy had an obvious sensitive and intuitional trend.

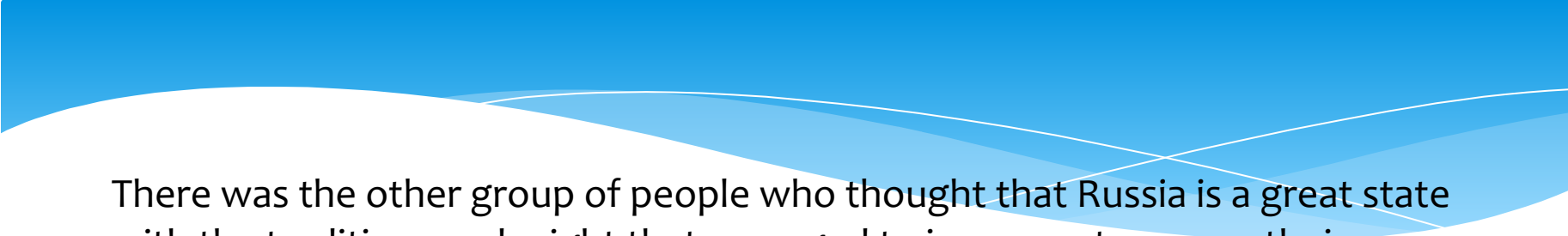
It should be mentioned that Russian philosophy was under a great influence of religion as religion and theology were the first forms of philosophic thinking. According to N. Losky the Russian philosophy trusted and based its thinking on the mysterious religious experiments that made up the whole unity of a human and the God. Talking of the peculiarities of the Russian Philosophy we should mention the cognitive realism. The Human is not alienated from reality, but a part of it and is confident in its acquisition by means of rational and intellectual cognition as well as by the power intuition and sensitive experience.

One of the main features of the Russian Philosophy and thinking in general is the deep interest to the person of a human, his spiritual world which are treated not only as the area of subjectivity, but as a sovereign reality connected with cosmos and divine being.

Some special emphasis should be on the issues of morality with the **Good Deed** as the principal element. Truth as the reflection of the actual state of things meant more in reality and Pravda had a strong moral incentive of justice as the basic element of being which incorporated the intention for progressive change and improvement.

Like Kazakh Philosophy the key philosophic issues were raised not only in scientific research, but also in literature and verse.

There were different times with ups and downs of the Russian State. By the period of the Newly Modern Times Russia was identified as the backward state far behind the advanced European countries. That was the reason of the policy of the Peter the great to catch up with the world leaders. It involved Russia into the learning process with the obvious attraction of the Western values. The supporters of this discourse were called the western advocates (zapadniki).



There was the other group of people who thought that Russia is a great state with the traditions and might that managed to incorporate many ethnic groups into a great Empire. They strongly believed that the development of science and technology could bring in the decay in culture that would be disastrous for the ethnic spirit. Civilization as the glimpse of the development could have a very negative effect on the mental state of things. The uniqueness of the spirit was the value not to be lost at the expense of the material success. This group of people was called patriots (Slavjanofili).

This struggle between the patriots and modernizers still goes on with the occasional victories of each of the involved parties.

We shall be going through the evolution of the ideas with the mention of the names of some of the heroes

**Peter Chaadaev**(1794-1856). He was the follower of the ideas of Teism (Deism – short term effect) and Providence. Took an active part in discussion between the Slavic way (Slavjanofilstvo & Zapadnichestvo) with the input of some original ideas on the place and the role of Russia in the course of the world development.

In 1829-1830 he created “Philosophic Letters” which caused some stormy discussions which were prohibited as all other his works. He was the supporter of the western way of development and was supported in a big way by V.Belinskyi.

**Alexander Herzen** (1812-1870) – Philosopher who combined his theoretical contemplations with the revolutionary activity, who set up the magazine in London “Kolokol” (Bell) to wake up and shake up Russia for democratic changes.

His interest in Philosophy was related to the extent how it can have an impact on the social life of the people.

He was inspired with the philosophy of Hegel in a big way on the cognitive side, but was critical for panlogism and putting the idea (idealism) on top of nature and history. The true cognition is the unity of experience and cognition.

His social ideal was socialism as the social order that can comply the interests of an individual and society.

**Nickolay Chernishevsky** Based his philosophy on the ideas on Feirbach's anthropology with the a human as the basic element of the reality and society as the set of interacting people. With a human as the key player he believed that the pattern of "happiness" is connected with "reasonable egoism". He also believed that there is a possibility for Russia to bypass capitalism with its problems and alienation.

**Fyodor Dostoevsky** (1821-1881). The author of many novels among which "Crime and Punishment" is known all over the world. Besides, he is the creator of a special philosophy of a human with the capacity of penetrating into the bottom of one's soul and its mysteries.

**Leo Tolstoy** (1828-1910) As a philosopher he got the reputation of a creator of the abstract Humanism. To live means to Love. All the cultural values he viewed from the extent they were achievable to people. His strong belief was that people is the only source of the moral values. Tolstoy was very critical of capitalism and statehood as the killers of the future of Russia.

**Vladimir Solovjev** His basic philosophic element was the idea of Universal Unity (Всеединства). Along this line he developed the trend to the fusion of philosophic and theological, rational and mysterious, Western and Eastern cultural traditions.

Talking of the essence of philosophy he made a point: “Philosophy emancipated a human being from the external violence and gave him inside essence. It dismantled (низвергла) all the false gods and paved the way for the true Godness. It was exactly the power of humane in a human”.

A human is a personal-social creature. There are three main forms of setting up a human's society: 1).Generic 2) National statehood 3).Universal interactions of people. The last format is the format of the future.

**Nickolay Berdjaev** In his philosophic system there was a distinction of the mysterious world (the world in commas with separation, hatred, slavery) and the true world without commas with love and liberty. The objective of a human is to get out of slavery and move towards a world of a cosmic love. The way to get out of this slavery is human's creativity that is given as a gift as the nature is the prototype and likeness of the creator which is God. Love can and actually creates new and everlasting life.


Viewing the creative individual N.B. denotes that he belongs to the society in a very empirical sense. The creativity comes from his commitment to Cosmos. Liberty and Creativity is not the privilege of some selected species, but something achievable for every one of any world outlook, generation and culture. At the same time he was pessimistic on the idea of progress as the majority of people live to death and grave with no input into the social well being. By his philosophic looks he was a religious existentialist.



He made a special emphasis on the tragedy in the life of a philosopher. Philosophers who were quite few in number were suppressed by the theologians, politicians, conservatives and revolutionaries. He also paid attention to the confrontation of philosophy and theology due to the difference in the system of arguments as dogmas are dead when we talk of the objective scientific knowledge. He also delineated the difference with science when it goes to the extreme. Philosophy has its own specific vehicle of cognition.

His contribution was great with regard to the distinctions made between culture and civilization. Culture is the peak of the human development which is the result of the successive steps of developing one's talents on processing and utilizing the objects of nature.

In the course of time a human pays more attention to the material vehicles that can make life easier and more comfortable. Civilization comes out with the technical tools and easily disseminated. The more influential is civilization the more is the negative effect of the human's spirit.

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- Cosmic Philosophy** was one of the peculiar features of the Russian philosophy. The key ideas put forward by the Russian cosmists:
- Immortality of the mankind in the outer space (K.Tziolkovskiy)
  - Transition from the biosphere to the noosphere (V.Vernadskiy)
  - Through the investigation of the Nature reverse to the life of the past generations (N.Fedorov)
  - The integral link of the biosphere and the Sun
  - Cosmic origin of the consciousness (N.Rerikh)

**Tziolkovskiy** differs the life on earth and in the outer space. The one on earth is still far from being perfect. When we reach the stage of the cosmic life it will be a happy life. We should be technically fit to visit all other planets with the respective change of our biological facilities.

**Vernadskyi** considers the life on earth as some special geological layer with the complex of bio-chemical reactions that in the end of the day can produce some special layer with reason. He calls it **noosphere** with the different forms of life existing in harmony.

**N. Fedorov** is of opinion that in the future people will be able to guarantee the immortality for the mankind due to the development of science.

**N. Rerikh** considers that there are two polar feelings – good and evil struggling in a human soul. They are not equal, but the world should be changed on the basis of Good, Truth and Beauty.