

a colossal job of spiritual education and enlightenment of the popular masses, who have fallen away from the old ways and been mobilized into frenetic movement. For this [education] one needs to spiritually prepare. And with this is connected the primary task of the emigration." Émigrés needed to abandon their reactionary goals, Berdiaev wrote, and not limit their Christianity to personal salvation, which constituted "a rejection of a creative relationship to questions of the life of all mankind and the entire world."<sup>66</sup> It was the self-appointed task of the editors of *Put'* to initiate the process of creative spiritual work.

Paradoxically, Berdiaev and Frank, who were such effective and relentless critics of the faults and failures of the Russian intelligentsia, presented their calls to inner spiritual rebirth entirely within the framework of traditional intelligentsia *obshchestvennost'*, a sense of public duty. It was their goal to assist the people (including, but not limited to, the wayward *intelligenty*) to see their way toward spiritual rebirth. For Frank, the monastic separatism that characterized Russian Orthodoxy had kept it from being a beacon to ordinary people: "Long ago the Russian religious spirit stopped strengthening the people in their daily working life, stopped nourishing their earthly economic and legal relations with moral agency."<sup>67</sup> The task of the religious philosopher, then, was to guide the people along the path (*put'*) to a spiritual rebirth that could eventually transform Russia as a whole. Berdiaev's relentless energy in establishing institutions and publications to propagate these views, from the Free Academy of Spiritual Culture in Moscow, to *Sofiia* and the Religious-Philosophical Academy, to *Put'*, was directed quite explicitly at educating all who would listen concerning the way toward this hoped-for renaissance.

<sup>66</sup> "Dukhovnye zadachi," 5, 7.

<sup>67</sup> Frank, "De Profundis," cited in Boobbyer, "Two Democracies," 204.

## EURASIANISM: AFFIRMING THE PERSON IN AN "ERA OF FAITH"

MARTIN BEISSWENGER

Eurasianism, an intellectual movement among Russian émigrés in central and western Europe during the 1920s and 1930s, is not usually associated with the defense of human dignity or with concern for the person (*lichnost'*). On the contrary, critics of the movement have compared its precepts to authoritarianism, fascism, or even totalitarianism.<sup>1</sup> The focus of scholarly attention has hitherto been on Eurasianism's abstract speculations that geographically, culturally, and historically Russia was a country *sui generis*, neither a part of Europe, nor of Asia, but a self-contained "continent" in between and a synthesis of both – Eurasia.<sup>2</sup> Rather than examining the Eurasianists' conceptualization of the individual person, many historians of the movement have studied its bold historiosophical declarations and "geopolitical" statements, often instrumentalized as justifications of Russian neo-imperialist intentions.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars have scrutinized Eurasianist efforts to solve imperial Russia's nationality problem by inventing a "supra-national" Eurasian nationalism that would encompass all the country's nationalities, transcending traditional Russian ethnic nationalism.<sup>4</sup> In view of the movement's sweeping generalizations about historical developments

<sup>1</sup> For example, Fëdor Stepun called Eurasianism "Russian fascism": F.A. Stepun, review of *Evraziiskii vremennik* 3 (Berlin, 1923), *Sovremennye zapiski*, no. 21 (1924), 404; Nikolai Berdiaev identified the Eurasianist "ideocracy" and its "utopian state absolutism" as an example of the "total state": Nicolai Berdjajew, "Zur Kritik des Eurasiertums," *Orient und Occident*, no. 17 (1934), 35–36. Roman Bäcker claimed that Eurasianism "evolved from a specific nationalism towards a not finally crystallized totalitarianism": R. Bekker, "Mezhdu revoliutsionnym konservatizmom i totalitarizmom. Dilemmy otsenki mezhoennogo evraziistva," *Slavianovedenie*, no. 5 (2001), 17–18.

<sup>2</sup> N.V. Riasanovsky, "The Emergence of Eurasianism," *California Slavic Studies* 4 (1967), 39–72; O. Böss, *Die Lehre der Eurasier. Ein Beitrag zur russischen Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1961); S. Wiederkehr, *Die eurasische Bewegung. Wissenschaft und Politik in der russischen Emigration der Zwischenkriegszeit und im postsowjetischen Russland* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> A recent example is V.G. Makarov, "Pax rossica." *Istoriia evraziiskogo dvizheniia i sud'by evraziitsev*, "Voprosy filosofii," no. 9 (2006), 102–117.

<sup>4</sup> The post-imperial and post-colonial context of the movement has been emphasized by M. Laruelle, *L'Idéologie eurasiiste russe ou Comment penser l'empire* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999) and S. Glebov, "Science, Culture, and Empire: Eurasianism as a Modernist Movement," *Slavic and East European Information Resources*, no. 4 (2003), 13–31.

over the *longue durée* and its interest in large political and national collectives and geographical units, it is not surprising that scholars have neglected the attention that Eurasianists gave to the individual and its defense.

Yet concern for the “person,” understood as a divine creation “in the image and likeness of God,” was at the very center of Eurasianism. This concern was a direct consequence of the movement’s profound religiosity and its effort to create a new Russian ideology on the basis of Orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup> Stimulated by the catastrophic *Zeitgeist* of the Great War, Russian Revolution, and Civil War, leading Eurasianists embraced the spirituality of the pre-war Russian religious renaissance. From its origins in 1921 until the early 1940s, Eurasianism gradually came to affirm the sanctity of personhood and of personal rights vis-à-vis the collective. Initially, Eurasianism was highly ambiguous about the safeguarding of the individual person against social collectives, asserting the “absolute value” of both individual and collective. Only after the rise of totalitarian states and ideologies in the late 1920s and early 1930s did Eurasianism’s ambiguity in this respect gradually dissolve. While some Eurasianists chose to support the collectivism of the Soviet Union, others explicitly denounced totalitarian states and ideologies and demanded the defense of the individual person.

Analysis of Eurasianism’s ambiguous personalism makes clear the movement’s essentially religious foundation, reveals the ideological heterogeneity of its members, and shows that Eurasianism was not a static set of “canonical” ideas, but a dynamic ideology that continuously changed in response to social and political events.

#### ANTICIPATING EURASIA’S RELIGIOUS MISSION

Eurasianism emerged as an intellectual movement in 1921 with the publication of the almanac *Iskhod k Vostoku* (*Exodus to the East*). It contained contributions by the economist P.N. Savitskii (1895–1968), the ethnographer and linguist N.S. Trubetskoi (1890–1938), the musicologist and art critic P.P. Suvchinskii (1892–1985), and the historian and theologian G.V. Florovskii (1893–1979).<sup>6</sup> The collection’s powerful preface set the general tone for the movement’s emerging ideology. The authors were united by their experience of a historical catastrophe but also by their sense of what Aleksandr Herzen called the plasticity and

<sup>5</sup> Surprisingly, there is only one explicit study of Eurasianism’s attitude to religion: Iu. K. Gerasimov, “Religioznaia pozitsiia evraziistva,” *Russkaia literatura*, no. 1 (1995), 159–176.

<sup>6</sup> The emergence of Eurasianism as a movement was preceded by Trubetskoi’s pamphlet *Evropa i chelovechestvo* (Sofia: Rossiisko-Bolgarskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, [1920]) and Savitskii’s review of it: “Evropa i Evraziia (Po povodu broshiu kn. N.S. Trubetskogo ‘Evropa i chelovechestvo’),” *Russkaia mysl'*, nos. 1–2 (1921), 119–138.

openness of history. They anticipated an imminent “migration and regeneration of culture,” the decline of Europe, and the rise of a Eurasian Russia that would “reveal to the world an all-human truth.” The Eurasianist authors acknowledged their debt to the Russian Slavophile tradition, yet rejected their predecessors’ populism, their idealization of the peasant community’s collectivism, and their identification with Slavic ethnicity. The Eurasianists recognized the importance of creative individuals and praised Russia as a multi-ethnic empire, where non-Russian nationalities were in close contact with the Russian people as active participants in the building of Russian culture, based on an “affinity of souls” and mutual economic interests. The Eurasianists rejected communism, yet interpreted the Russian Revolution as an elemental national act of resistance against forced Europeanization.<sup>7</sup>

The Eurasianist writings of the early 1920s were animated by a profound religiosity, by the anticipation of an “era of faith,” and by the desire to defend Russian Orthodoxy as the only true confession of Christianity. All the Eurasianists advocated a holistic spirituality and rejected the secularist trends of imperial Russia and the alleged materialism of western Europe. At the same time, individual Eurasianists approached Russia’s past, present, and future from their own perspective, often based on their field of professional expertise. Throughout the first half of the 1920s, the leading Eurasianists (Trubetskoi, Suvchinskii, and Savitskii) formed an ideological “troika.” Although other authors contributed to various Eurasianist publications, the ideas of the “troika” were decisive and influenced Eurasianism throughout its existence.<sup>8</sup>

For Nikolai Trubetskoi, Eurasianism’s apologist of nationalism, cultural diversity was an essential element of the divinely sanctioned world-order.<sup>9</sup> He perceived the multiplicity of human languages and cultures as God’s punishment for human hubris symbolized in the construction of the Tower of Babel, an example of “blasphemous self-exaltation” and pure technical progress that had lost its religious purpose. According to Trubetskoi, genuine cultural diversity was a precondition for satisfying the spiritual and material needs of human societies. A homogeneous universal culture, Trubetskoi cautioned, can encompass only those elements common to all human beings, that is, their “material needs” rather than their tastes, beliefs, religion, ethics, and aesthetics. The inevitable result of cultural homogeneity would be “intensive

<sup>7</sup> *Iskhod k Vostoku. Predchuvstviia i sversheniia. Uverzhdenie evraziistsev* (Sofia, 1921), pp. iii–viii.

<sup>8</sup> G.V. Florovskii had left the movement already in 1923 because of its gradual politization. On him see A. Blane (ed.), *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> On Trubetskoi see N.S. Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia’s Identity* (Anatoly Liberman (ed.), Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1991).

scientific and technical development” accompanied by “spiritual and moral degeneration.”<sup>10</sup>

National cultures, Trubetskoi argued, are highly original, “noble in their incomprehensibility and immense complexity and at the same time complex harmony.”<sup>11</sup> Trubetskoi classified Russian popular culture as genuinely “Eurasian” and considered it a perfect example of such “complex harmony.” It was neither European, nor purely Slavic, but permanently in touch with the “East.”<sup>12</sup> In this sense, Trubetskoi’s “Eurasia” was a particular “cultural-historical type,” similar to those established half a century earlier by the Russian Panslavist thinker Nikolai Danilevskii (1822–1885) in his *Russia and Europe* (1871).<sup>13</sup>

Pëtr Suvchinskii argued that Eurasian culture was based on the Orthodox religion as an all-embracing spiritual system.<sup>14</sup> His call for the total sacralization and ritualization of life, society, and culture was Suvchinskii’s main contribution to Eurasianism. Inspired by the Russian symbolist idea of “creating life” (*zhiznetvorchestvo*), he located Russia’s vital spiritual forces not in the bureaucracy of the state-dominated church, but in the practice of Orthodoxy in everyday life. Here, spirituality was ritualized, performatively experienced as art, as the “confession of everyday life” (*bytovoe ispovednichestvo*), where the “mundane and the religious are synthesized in an inseparable unity.” In his opinion, the Russian people’s performative religiosity fundamentally differed from the consciously-dogmatic approach to religion characteristic in the West.<sup>15</sup> Russians practiced an “Eastern” religiosity that embodied the divine wholeness of life. Suvchinskii was convinced that “only constant, persistent and habitual memory of God can direct consciousness toward true understanding of the divine lawfulness of the world and the entire process of life.”<sup>16</sup>

Pre-revolutionary Russia’s intelligentsia and government, he complained, had largely ignored the “confession of everyday life.” Unfulfilled popular religious longings ultimately triggered the revolution, which Suvchinskii viewed as a spiritual awakening during which the country had become aware of its “cultural

<sup>10</sup> N.S. Trubetskoi, “Vavilonskaia bashnia i smeshenie iazykov,” *Evrasiiskii Vremennik* 3 (1923), 109–111.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 119.

<sup>12</sup> N.S. Trubetskoi, “Verkhi i nizy russkoi kul'tury” in *Iskhod k Vostoku*, pp. 86–103.

<sup>13</sup> N. Danilevskii, *Rossia i Evropa*, 5th edn. (St. Petersburg: Izd. N. Strakhova, 1895; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966).

<sup>14</sup> On Suvchinskii see Alla Bretanitskaia (ed.), *Petr Suvchinskii i ego vremia* (Moscow: Izdatel'skoe ob'edinenie “Kompozitor,” 1999) and Sergey Glebov, “Le frémissement du temps: Petr Suvchinskii, l'eurasisme et l'esthétique de la modernité” in *Pierre Suvchinskii, cahiers d'étude* (Éric Humbertclaude (ed.), Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), pp. 163–223.

<sup>15</sup> P.P. Suvchinskii, “Inobytie russkoi religioznosti,” *Evrasiiskii Vremennik* 3 (1923), 82–86.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 103–104.

and political particularity,” had returned to its genuine foundations, and had begun to search for its religious mission.<sup>17</sup>

The theme of Russia’s religious mission was further elaborated by Pëtr Savitskii, who added to Trubetskoi’s and Suvchinskii’s ideas an economic and geographic dimension.<sup>18</sup> A comprehensive knowledge of Russia’s particular Eurasian nature, he argued, was the key for Russia’s successful accomplishment of its divine mission: the economic transformation of Eurasia and the “East” into a prospering “Garden of Eden.” Russia’s experience of incomparable suffering under the Bolshevik regime was a sure sign of the country’s divine selection. In its vibrant religiosity, Savitskii explained, Russia had shown its close connection with the “East.” Russian art and life had always been affected by other cultures, and without the Turanic and Mongolian influences Russian statehood could not have emerged. Now it was Russia’s mission to raise the economically languishing East, where the “era of faith” had never ended, to new prosperity.<sup>19</sup>

Russia-Eurasia, uniquely situated between Europe and Asia, could reconcile the scientific achievements of the West with the spiritual legacy of the East. Far from denying scientific progress or economic prosperity per se, Savitskii rejected western European culture because of its “enslavement of the spirit by the fetishes of technical ‘progress,’ its neglect of the Heavenly Kingdom (*Grad Nezdeshnii*) . . . and its excessive concern for the Earthly Kingdom (*Grad Zdesnii*).”<sup>20</sup> And in this new era Russia-Eurasia would be the leader, uniting the constitutive principles of the West and the East: “economy and religion, knowledge and faith.”<sup>21</sup>

The Eurasianists did not limit themselves to contemplative religious anticipations and philosophical speculations: although initially they had rejected politics and declared the “primacy of culture,” after 1923 many of them became committed to changing the politics of the Russian émigré community and, more importantly, of Soviet Russia. One of the driving forces behind this activism was Pëtr Arapov (1895–1930s), a former officer of the Imperial Guard, who joined the movement in 1922. He wanted Eurasianism to be “not only an academic current,” but also a “potentially effective force” politically. For him this meant the energetic propagation of Eurasianist ideas within the Soviet

<sup>17</sup> P.P. Suvchinskii, “K preodoleniiu revoliutsii,” *Evrasiiskii vremennik* 3 (1923), 32–36.

<sup>18</sup> On Savitskii see S. Glebov, “A Life with Imperial Dreams: Petr Nikolaevich Savitsky, Eurasianism, and the Invention of ‘Structuralist’ Geography,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2005), 299–329, and Martin Beisswenger (ed.), *Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii (1895–1968): A Bibliography of his Published Works* (Prague: Slavonic Library, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> P.N. Savitskii, “K obosnovaniuu evraziistva,” *Rul'*, no. 349 (January 10, 1922), 2–3.

<sup>20</sup> P.N. Savitskii, “Khoziaistvo i vera,” *Rul'*, no. 295 (November 5, 1921), 1–2.

<sup>21</sup> Savitskii, “K obosnovaniuu evraziistva,” 2.

Union.<sup>22</sup> The decisive stimulus in shifting Eurasianism's focus from philosophical ideas to political deeds was its collaboration, starting in 1923, with the so-called "Trest," allegedly an underground anti-communist resistance group but, in fact, a bogus organization set up by the OGPU to control and manipulate the Russian emigration.<sup>23</sup> Assured by "Trest" of their popularity within the Soviet Union, Eurasianists significantly increased their publication activities and soon transformed themselves into a political party. The financial means for such large-scale operations were provided in 1924 by Arapov's friend and fellow officer P.N. Malevskii-Malevich (1891–1974), who had received £10,000 from the English philanthropist Henry Norman Spalding (1877–1953) "for the Russian cause."<sup>24</sup> The Eurasianists' new "political" character had decisive consequences for their theoretical writings. In order to overthrow the communist regime and replace it with a Eurasianist one, it was not enough to enthusiastically predict Eurasia's mission in the East, to affirm a genuinely multinational Eurasian nationalism, or to advocate the sacralization of everyday life. What was needed was a pragmatic, systematic, and explicitly political declaration. This program required a firm organizing principle – a principle the Eurasianists found in the "affirmation of the person."

#### AFFIRMATION OF THE PERSON

The concept of the person was the Eurasianists' principal instrument for translating their general religious expectations of Russia's "era of faith" of the early 1920s into a political program. It emerged between 1925 and 1927 in intensive discussions among the movement's leaders. Besides the "troika" (Savitskii, Suvchinskii, and Trubetskoi), the leadership by then included the former officers Arapov and Malevskii-Malevich as well as the historian and philosopher L.P. Karsavin (1882–1952). Together these six men formed the "Eurasianist Council." Some aspects of Eurasianism's personalism were developed in their private correspondence; other aspects were elaborated in programmatic booklets and articles.<sup>25</sup> Despite all the efforts to forge a common understanding,

<sup>22</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), fond 5783 (fond P.N. Savitskii), op. 1, ed. khr. 444, ll. 1–1 verso, protocol of meeting Arapov, Savitskii, and Suvchinskii in Berlin, March 1923.

<sup>23</sup> On "Trest" see Lazar Fleishman, *V tiskakh provokatsii. Operatsiia "Trest" i russkaia zarubezhnaia pechat'* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> GARF, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 359, ll. 94–95 ob., letter Suvchinskii to Trubetskoi, October 29, 1924.

<sup>25</sup> Some archival materials on the internal discussions were published (in excerpts and with several inaccuracies) by B. Stepanov, "Spor evraziitsev o tserkvi, lichnosti i gosudarstve (1925–1927)" in M.A. Kolerov (ed.), *Issledovaniia po istorii russkoi mysli: Ezhegodnik za 2001–2002 gody* (Moscow: Tri kvadrata, 2002), pp. 74–173.

Eurasianism's concept of the person remained for the time being ambiguous and contradictory. Although all the Eurasianists agreed on the fundamental importance of Orthodoxy for their ideology, each had different ideas about the relationship between the individual person and so-called "collective persons," such as the state, the nation, culture, the economy, and the church. The difficulty was that the Eurasianists explicitly confirmed the "absolute value" of the individual, while claiming the same value for collective persons of a "higher order," such as the state or the nation.

The main protagonist of Eurasianism's programmatic efforts was Lev Karsavin, who was introduced to the movement in April 1924 by Suvchinskii.<sup>26</sup> Karsavin was ideally suited to synthesize the diverging views of the individual Eurasianists into a programmatic booklet.<sup>27</sup> Already in 1923 he had welcomed Eurasianism's religious interpretation of the Russian Revolution and of the new "era of faith," yet he also criticized the lack of a coherent philosophical analysis that would rationally prove the movement's claims.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, starting in 1923 Karsavin had worked on a comprehensive summary of the principles of Christianity that he now could "apply" to the Eurasianist program.<sup>29</sup> Inspired by the Slavophile thinker Aleksei Khomiakov's ecclesiological tract *The Church is One* (1844–1845), Karsavin introduced the concept of the "symphonic" or "conciliar" (*sobornaia*) person, his most important contribution to Eurasianism, as a means to understand the hierarchical relationship among the individual, the state, culture, and the church.<sup>30</sup> This concept was based on the individual's relationship to the divine and modeled on the example of the church. The ambiguity of the "church" as an "absolute" and also an "empirical" phenomenon could cause a confusion of these two spheres. Karsavin tried to solve this problem by calling upon the empirical to become sacred: he desired an "ecclesiastization" (*otserkovlenie*) of the state and of the world in general. Ultimately, however, the attempt to transfer categories describing the relationship of the individual person with God and the church to the secular sphere of the social and political remained highly problematic.

Karsavin made it clear that individual human beings are persons only by virtue of partaking of the divine, since, in the Christian understanding, personhood was

<sup>26</sup> GARF, f. 5783, op. 1, d. 359, l.74 verso, letter Suvchinskii to Trubetskoi, April 11, 1924.

<sup>27</sup> [L.P. Karsavin], *Evrasiatstvo. Opyt sistematicheskogo izlozheniia* ([Paris]: Evraziiskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1926). On Karsavin see S.S. Khoruzhii's Introduction to L.P. Karsavin, *Religiozno-filosofskie sochineniia* (S.S. Khoruzhii (ed.), Moscow: Renessans, 1992), vol. 1, pp. v–lxxiii, and Iu.B. Melikh, *Personalizm L.P. Karsavina i evropeiskaia filosofiiia* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> L.P. Karsavin, "Evropa i Evraziia," *Sovremennye zapiski*, no. 15 (1923), 297–314.

<sup>29</sup> L.P. Karsavin, *O nachalakh* (A.K. Klement'ev (ed.), St. Petersburg: YMCA Press, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> Khomiakov's tract was reprinted with Karsavin's introduction and notes: A.S. Khomiakov, *O tserkvi* (L.P. Karsavin (ed.), Berlin: Evraziiskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1926).

first of all a divine principle, connected with the Holy Spirit. As material beings, human beings are not yet persons, and they become so not through their own efforts alone, but through God. Thus, by themselves individuals are neither fully self-determined nor entirely free; they become self-determining and free persons in “communion” with God through the church as the ultimate sacral sphere. The relationship between the individual and God is mediated by the church, which Karsavin considered, in its ideal and metaphysical essence, a perfect, “all-united” (*vsë-edinaia*) community of faithful individuals. Standing between the ideal church and the individual there were other collective persons, not perfectly “all-united,” but “conciliar” or “symphonic” – in Karsavin’s words, “a hierarchy of persons with a decreasing degree of conciliarity (*sobornost'*) ranging from the united Church itself to individuals.” Although these social entities were hierarchically higher than the individual person, Karsavin denied that such collective persons would restrict the freedom of individual persons, explicitly declaring that “all persons are equal in value.”<sup>31</sup> Since both collective and individual persons depend on each other, he thought that one could not exist without and beyond the other. He meant that the individual could not exist as a person independent of other individuals or collectives; indeed, each individual “specifically expresses and realizes the whole in his very own and particular way.” Similarly, collective persons could not exist outside their manifestations in individuals or “*otherwise than as their free unity*.”<sup>32</sup>

Yet this free and harmonious relationship between individual and collective persons, Karsavin admitted, was possible in all its perfection only in the absolute sphere of the church. In the empirical sphere things were different. Here the imperfect and sinful individual strove not toward harmony with others but acted egoistically. For the sake of the individual and the whole, it was therefore necessary to restrict the individual’s egoistic self-interest, because otherwise he would not only harm the collective and other individuals, but ultimately destroy himself. In practice, the limitation of the individual can be realized by one or more collective entities: family, the social group, or the nation. Each of these collectives was held together by some leader or spokesperson, who stood in a certain power relationship vis-à-vis other members of the collective.<sup>33</sup>

The problems with Eurasianist political ideas reveal themselves most clearly in Karsavin’s definition of the state and its function. The state, he claimed, was of principal significance, because only through and within the state could the “unity of all spheres” constitute itself as an “externally unified culture”

<sup>31</sup> L.P. Karsavin, *Tserkov', lichnost' i gosudarstvo* (Paris: Evraziiskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1927), pp. 6–8.

<sup>32</sup> L.P. Karsavin, “Osnovy politiki,” *Evraziiskii vremennik* 5 (1927), 189. Original emphasis.

<sup>33</sup> Karsavin, *Evraziistvo*, p. 39; “Osnovy politiki,” 191 and 193–194.

and the symphonic collective subject “acquire genuine personal existence.” The state was the form alone through which a given culture gained its “personal existence and personal realization [*kachestvovanie*].”<sup>34</sup> In Karsavin’s view, culture and the state were so closely interrelated as to be virtually identical: “In principle the state is culture itself in its unity and by its capacity to bring unity out of diversity – that is, in principle, the state encompasses all spheres of life.”<sup>35</sup> Yet Karsavin cautioned that it was wrong to worship the state, which, after all, was only an empirical entity, and therefore as “sinful” as an individual human being.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, Karsavin claimed, state and culture would become the church in the broadest and absolute sense – they would undergo full and complete “ecclesiastization.”<sup>37</sup> Although Karsavin’s concepts of “all-unity” and “conciliar” or “symphonic persons” of various hierarchical rank allowed for a certain ideological flexibility, he blurred the distinctions between the metaphysical and the material, the “absolute” and the “empirical,” between the individual person and his rights, on the one hand, and the collective “persons” on the other. In the end, Karsavin’s political writings remained vague, making it impossible to determine precisely the exact distribution of power and authority between the state and the individual or between the state and other collective entities.

Each of the other prominent Eurasianists shared some of Karsavin’s ideas, in particular his notion of “symphonic persons,” but they rejected others. Each of them had different views on the relationship of the individual to the collective. While Arapov and Malevskii–Malevich demanded the predominance of the collective, in particular the state, over the individual, Savitskii defended the rights of individual persons in the economic sphere. Trubetskoi’s position was somewhere in between.

More than any other Eurasianist, Arapov emphasized the primacy of collectives over the individual, and he demanded that the state organize society, for without it neither culture nor true religion was possible. Arapov’s ideas (his fierce rejection of nationalism, his call for a dominant state as a precondition for cultural creativity, and his fascination with contradictions and paradoxes) betrayed the strong influence of the Russian diplomat and conservative thinker K.N. Leont'ev (1831–1891).<sup>38</sup> In order to create a strong Eurasian state, Arapov claimed, it was essential to reject modern, ethnic “nationalism” in favor of a pre-modern supra-national concept of authority resting firmly on the ruling

<sup>34</sup> Karsavin, “Osnovy politiki,” 207. <sup>35</sup> Karsavin, *Evraziistvo*, p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> Karsavin, “Osnovy politiki,” 207. <sup>37</sup> Karsavin, *Evraziistvo*, p. 26.

<sup>38</sup> On Leont'ev see K. Leont'ev, *Vostok, Rossiia i Slaviansvo: Filosofskaiia i politicheskaia publitsistika. Dukhovnaia proza (1872–1891)* (G.B. Kremnev (ed.), Moscow: Respublika, 1996).

power.<sup>39</sup> He conceded that individual national cultures could function within an over-all Eurasian culture, but only if Eurasian culture were truly supra-national and committed to “cultural tasks of a universal nature.”<sup>40</sup> The promotion of creativity and culture was the main task of the state, an “apparatus of coercion” ruled by an ideologically unified group of people, who were “forcibly realizing all means for fostering the creativity, development and diffusion of this culture.”<sup>41</sup> But cultural activity was not an end itself: ultimately it served religious and eschatological purposes. By organizing the environment and creating a new culture, the Eurasian state would raise life to a higher plain of existence, closer toward Transfiguration. This transformation, Arapov claimed, was “a perpetually on-going process, never to be concluded” that needed to be undertaken “without taking into account the happiness or suffering of the people.”<sup>42</sup>

Vis-à-vis the lofty goals of state and culture Arapov gave little agency to the individual. Acknowledging the existence of the human person not as “a dot or an atom” but as a “system of qualities,” he explicitly claimed the primacy of culture “as a system” over the individual. As a “system of qualities” all persons were “functionally” interconnected with each other, and each individual was determined through his or her participation in the system (*sistemnost*).<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, Arapov declared, “the rights of the individual person must be limited by the cultural goals that are realized by the state.”<sup>44</sup>

Arapov’s outlook was shared by Malevskii-Malevich, who saw the individual’s duty in spiritual and religious service alone. Like Arapov and Karsavin, he rejected an independent, self-determined individual, arguing that “the meaning of human existence does not lie in the egoistic self-assertion of the individual, but in his service to God and man.” He made it clear that “from a moral point of view” the individual possessed only one “absolute right”: “to have the opportunity of serving this great purpose in the best possible way, without obstacles to impede his work of service. All other rights are derived from this and are correlative to definite duties.”<sup>45</sup>

Not all Eurasianists agreed with Karsavin’s and Arapov’s definition of the state and culture as “symphonic persons” or regarded them as principal agents

<sup>39</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 410, l. 45, letter Arapov to Council of Seven, September 7, 1925.

<sup>40</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 411, l. 68, letter Arapov to Trubetskoi, October 5, 1925.

<sup>41</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 411, l. 50, letter Arapov to Council of Seven, September 17, 1925.

<sup>42</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 411, l. 81, letter Arapov to Trubetskoi, December 4, 1925.

<sup>43</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 411, ll. 67–68, letter Arapov to Trubetskoi, October 5, 1925.

<sup>44</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 411, l. 50, letter Arapov to Council of Seven, September 17, 1925.

<sup>45</sup> P.N. Malevskii-Malevich, *A New Party in Russia* (London: Routledge, 1928), pp. 80–81. Original emphasis.

within the empirical sphere. Trubetskoi, for example, regarded Karsavin’s and Arapov’s views as “state-worshipping,” a typical western, rather than Eurasian phenomenon. Trubetskoi gave more recognition to the agency of individual persons than did Karsavin, Arapov, and Malevskii, yet his views about the person were vitalist and highly elitist. Still, the starting point of his Eurasianism was “the affirmation of the person, . . . created in the image and likeness of God.” In this respect, he claimed, the human person resembles God: the person “is never just a dot or an atom, but is always a system or a council of certain qualities. God himself . . . is a ‘Council of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,’ and every individual human person is also conciliar.” The “conciliarity” of God inscribed on every human person was, in Trubetskoi’s opinion, also inscribed on the nation as a human collective. In sharp contrast to Karsavin and Arapov, Trubetskoi did not describe state and culture as “persons,” for they were not created by God but were “the creation of human hands.” As such, they represented a relative value, whereas the value of persons, individual and collective (the nation), was absolute.<sup>46</sup>

This did not mean, however, that all human beings were identical or equal. Although every human being possessed certain “volitional fluids” (*volevyie fluidy*), only those individuals with the most active “fluids” should make up the “ruling stratum” and government.<sup>47</sup> United by a common ideology and by a “single unitary party,” these individuals alone were genuinely devoted to the people’s needs. In such an “ideocracy,” the rulers would express the will of the nation more organically than could professional politicians in a democracy, where public opinion and national culture were manipulated by “private capital and the press.”<sup>48</sup> Countering Arapov’s critique of nationalism, Trubetskoi advanced the idea that, precisely in a supra-national Eurasia, a whole system of nations could form yet another collective person of an even higher order, even as individual nations and their “ruling stratum” preserved certain particularities.<sup>49</sup>

Trubetskoi’s vitalist and “ideocratic” understanding of the state and society also affected his views of the church, whose task he saw exclusively in the

<sup>46</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 408, l. 338 and ll. 340–341, letter Trubetskoi to Arapov, undated (late September 1925). On the scientific implications of Trubetskoi’s views on the person see N.S. Trubetskoi, “Ot avtora” in *K probleme russkogo samopoznaniia: sobranie statei* ([Paris]: Evraziiskoe knigoizdatel’stvo, 1927), pp. 3–9, and Patrick Sériot, *Structure et totalité: les origines intellectuelles du structuralisme en Europe centrale et orientale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999).

<sup>47</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 312, l. 42 verso, “Soobrazheniia N.S. T[rubetskogo] po povodu zapiski L.P. K[arsavina] ‘O Tserkvi, lichnosti i gosudarstve.’”

<sup>48</sup> N.S. Trubetskoi, “O gosudarstvennom stroe i forme pravleniia,” *Evraziiskaia khronika*, no. 8 (1927), 5.

<sup>49</sup> GARE, f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 408, ll. 339–340, letter Trubetskoi to Arapov, undated (late September 1925).

salvation of the “soul of the person – individuals and nations.” Since the state lacked a soul, the church should not attempt to directly interfere with politics, but should rather pursue the “ecclesiastization” of individual persons. Trubetskoi distinguished between the church’s deep commitment to the individual (“for the Church every person possesses absolute value, regardless of his earthly role in the life of the state”) and its necessary moderation in the political sphere.<sup>50</sup>

Although Savitskii welcomed the idea of the “symphonic” person in principle, his own affirmation of the person focused more on the individual.<sup>51</sup> His ideal of personhood was the integral yet relatively self-determined person, the “master” (*khoziain*), who through labor elevated and spiritualized his material environment. Here, Savitskii built upon Sergei Bulgakov’s attempt in *Philosophy of Economy* (1912) to spiritualize the material, empirical sphere and to transcend positivism and materialism.<sup>52</sup> Yet as an economist with a strong interest in economic geography, and as a student of the liberal economist Pëtr Struve, Savitskii was more interested in the empirical and pragmatic applications of Eurasianism than were some of his fellow Eurasianists. In his understanding, the “master” was God’s earthly counterpart and assistant, firmly embedded in a hierarchy of individual and collective persons, actively striving “to become like the Supreme Master of the world.”<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the capitalist “entrepreneur” (*predprinimatel’*), Savitskii’s “master” embodied the spiritual essence of the economy. The entrepreneur, Savitskii argued, cared only for his enterprise as the source of the highest possible net profit. Not so the “good master.” His relationship to the economy was holistic and respectful. For him the goal of earning maximal profit was only one among others, such as manifesting a responsible and caring attitude to employees and equipment, preserving the natural environment, and promoting sustainability.<sup>54</sup>

Savitskii’s praise of the personal element in the economy was no apology for economic liberalism. In accordance with the Eurasianist teachings that established a system of individual and collective persons on various levels, the individual “master” was to be complemented by the state – a “collective master” enforcing social justice. Only the interplay of individual and collective initiatives could provide for economic progress, technological innovation, and social justice.<sup>55</sup> Although Savitskii’s concept of the “master” did not amount to an

<sup>50</sup> GARF f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 312, ll. 42 verso and 43, “Soobrazheniia N.S. T[rubetskogo] po povodu zapiski L.P. K[arsavina] ‘O Tserkvi, lichnosti i gosudarstve.’”

<sup>51</sup> GARF f. 5783, op. 1, ed. khr. 337, l. 45, undated note (1926?) by P.N. Savitskii.

<sup>52</sup> S.N. Bulgakov, *Filosofia khoziaistva* (V.V. Sapov (ed.), Moscow: Nauka, 1990).

<sup>53</sup> P.N. Savitskii, “Khoziain i khoziaistvo,” *Evrasiiskii vremennik* 4 (1925), 426.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 408–412.

<sup>55</sup> P.N. Savitskii, “K voprosu o gosudarstvennom i chastnom nachale promyshlennosti. (Rossiia XVIII–XX vekov),” *Evrasiiskii vremennik* 5 (1927), 308.

unconditional defense of the individual human person and his rights, it nevertheless effectively affirmed the individual person in principle, even if only in the economy.

#### CRITIQUE, TENSIONS, AND SOLUTIONS

Until the late 1920s, the Eurasianists’ definitions of individual and collective persons and their attempt to situate them relative to each other remained complex and contradictory. Despite its seeming coherence, Karsavin’s hierarchical system of “symphonic” and individual persons and his call for an “ecclesiastization” of the empirical sphere towards an absolute “all-unity” raised several crucial problems, as contemporary critics were quick to point out.

The most insightful responses among the many reactions to Eurasianism’s political ideology belonged to the historian and literary critic P.M. Bitsilli (1879–1953), the philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev (1874–1948), and Georgii Florovskii, all of whom in one way or another had been affiliated with the Eurasianist movement during the 1920s, sympathized with some of its ideas, yet sharply rejected its political implications. Bitsilli did not see how the Eurasianists could reconcile their demand for a “single unitary party” for the future Eurasian “ideocracy” with the establishment of corporative bodies and councils on lower levels. The Eurasianists, he claimed, had to make a crucial choice: “either syndicalism or fascism, either freedom or dictatorship.” If the Eurasianists chose to base their political program upon the absolute truth of Orthodoxy, the result would be reactionary extremism – not “a party of unity,” but a new “Union of the Russian People.” Bitsilli considered a “Eurasianist Orthodox Party” an oxymoron. “Orthodoxy” and “Eurasia” were divergent spheres, since the Orthodox church transcended the “Eurasian continent.”<sup>56</sup>

In a similar vein, Berdiaev considered Eurasianism an ideology based more on “necessity” than on “freedom,” one in which the individual was subordinated to the collective and political decisions were to be devoid of moral evaluations.<sup>57</sup> He saw the cause of Eurasianism’s danger in its “naturalist monism and optimism,” features that led to a “utopian etatism.” In advocating the “ecclesiastization” of the state, Berdiaev explained, the Eurasianists conceived the state as a function of the church and erased the “fundamental dualism of the two orders.” Such monism, he wrote, “leads to the absolutization of the state, to the understanding of the state as an earthly embodiment of the truth, of the true ideology.” Eurasianism’s “ideocracy,” in Berdiaev’s opinion, was nothing

<sup>56</sup> P.M. Bitsilli, “Dva lika evraziistva,” *Sovremennye zapiski*, no. 31 (1927), 425–428.

<sup>57</sup> N.A. Berdiaev, “Utopicheskii etatizm evraziistsev,” *Put’*, no. 8 (1927), 141–144.

but Plato's utopian "perfect state" – an "absolute tyranny." Eurasianism had confused the earthly and the heavenly: "Monism is possible only in the kingdom of God, in the transfigured and deified (*obozhennyi*) world, on a new earth and new heaven." Until then, the dualism between the secular and the sacred must be retained in order to protect freedom, "the individual person, and the distinction between what is and what shall be." After all, Berdiaev confirmed, "the human being is higher than the state."<sup>58</sup>

Florovskii shared Berdiaev's concerns for the freedom of the individual. Florovskii was also seriously alarmed by the consequences Eurasianism's ambiguities might have for the church and the individual's relationship to God. According to Eurasianism, "created subjects" (*tvarnye sub'ekty*) acquired their personhood only through "communion" with God. Given the Eurasianist hierarchical system of individual and collective persons, Florovskii concluded, this would logically entail that "nations and individual 'conciliar' persons of lower rank," such as the "Eurasianist party," would also be in communion with God. This realization led him to fear that the "Eurasianist party" might become a self-proclaimed "church," imperiously standing above the real church. Florovskii emphatically defended the transcendental character of the Orthodox church against Eurasianist attempts to employ it for earthly purposes. "The Church neither creates nor realizes itself in the process of earthly cultural construction. Culture is not a stage in the emergence of the Church. . . . Not everything is a part of the Church, much, all too much, remains outside its threshold. . . . The Eurasianists burden the Church with too much of the worldly and earthly. Flesh and blood do not inherit eternal life."<sup>59</sup>

The tensions among the Eurasianists over individual and collective persons and over the sacred and the secular soon led to a rupture in the movement. In late 1928, the newly established Eurasianist newspaper, *Evrasiia*, published in the Parisian suburb Clamart by Arapov, Suvchinskii, Karsavin, Malevskii-Malevich, Sergei Efron (1893–1941), and D.P. Sviatopolk-Mirskii (1890–1939), openly embraced Marxism, thus opting for the collective over the individual and the secular over the sacred. This programmatic and political "evolution" provoked a serious ideological conflict with the other Eurasianists, prompting Trubetskoi's resignation from the leadership of the movement and, in early 1929, a "schism" that seriously weakened the movement. However, the new "Marxist" brand of Eurasianism in Paris soon disintegrated. Many of its members accepted the Soviet Union as the genuine and legitimate executor of Russia's spiritual mission in Eurasia. Some of them, such as Arapov, Efron, and Sviatopolk-Mirskii, even returned to the Soviet Union only to perish in prisons and camps.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>59</sup> G.V. Florovskii, "Evraziiskii soblazn," *Sovremennye zapiski*, no. 34 (1928), 340–342.

The remaining members of the movement also underwent a programmatic reorientation leading to a more pragmatic focus on the empirical sphere. Yet the experience of the schism, ideological competition with Marxism, Stalin's rise to power in the Soviet Union, and the darkening of the political horizon in Europe, all left their mark. In early September 1931, the First Eurasianist Congress in Brussels announced a new political program.

This new program was more secular and pragmatic than Eurasianism of the 1920s. It defined the status of the individual person in a more liberal fashion, yet still emphasized the role of the state and other "collective" persons. The Eurasianists now attached "exceptional significance to the concept and phenomenon of the person." They saw genuine human relations as possible only on the basis of "faith in the Divine," and if "permeated by the spirit of love and an unswerving care for the personal dignity of the human being." They did not want to turn freedom "into an idol" as had happened, they believed, in the West. They saw freedom as a neutral ideal that needed to be filled with the "good." Eurasianists remained hostile to a "one-sided cult of the animalistic human"; they noted that deification of the individual in the West and in the Soviet Union had led to "materialist individualism and materialist collectivism."<sup>60</sup>

The Eurasianism of 1932 also contained clear statements about safeguarding individual rights against the state, against social collectives, and against religious intolerance. In the future Eurasianist state, the right to "self-determination" was guaranteed "for social groups, nationalities, professions, unions and societies, and for individual persons." These individual and collective rights were "inalienable" and protected by the state.<sup>61</sup> The individual was also to be protected against complete "socialization," whereby the person "becomes deprived of the freedom to vote and becomes mere material" for the realization not of his own goals, but those of state and society.<sup>62</sup> The sphere of religious convictions was now declared a sphere of "absolute freedom." Although Eurasianists still attached "paramount significance" to Orthodoxy, they admitted that Eurasianists "belonging to other confessions of Russia-Eurasia" could approach common tasks "from the depths of their own religious convictions."<sup>63</sup> This explicit statement on religious freedom was a significant step away from the absolutization of Orthodoxy in the Eurasianism of the 1920s.

Mobilized by the change in Europe's political climate throughout the 1930s, some Eurasianists acknowledged even more explicitly the individual person's need to be safeguarded against domination by the collective, especially by the

<sup>60</sup> *Evraziistvo. Deklaratsiia, formulirovka, tezisy* ([Prague]: Izdanie evraziitsev, 1932), p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 15–16. <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19. <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.



state. During the 1920s it had been easy to speculate about "ideocracy," when, with the exception of fascist Italy and the NEP-era Soviet Union, there were no other examples of "ideocratic" regimes. By the early 1930s, however, with Stalin's brutal dictatorship, forced industrialization and violent collectivization in the Soviet Union, and the rise to power of National-Socialism in Germany, "ideocracy" had plainly revealed its dark sides. No doubt, the transformation of ideocratic states into "totalitarian" ones, as Eurasianists now called them, contributed to the Eurasianists' questioning of their own ideology and to the clarification of their political goals.

By 1934, even Karsavin, a former adherent of the pro-Soviet Clamart group, had revised his views. Although he continued fiercely to criticize radical democracy and party politics and to advocate the need for an organic theory of society, where the individual person was harmoniously interconnected with numerous collective persons on various levels, he also made it explicitly clear that Italian fascism and German National-Socialism were unacceptable totalitarian regimes. He now refrained from ascribing potential divinity to the state and dealt exclusively with the empirical and secular state. He found a remedy against both the state's totalitarian aspirations and individual license in the self-organization of society into non-governmental groups. Rather than depending on a "disorganized herd of voters who are convened from time to time" the state should rely on "living social groups . . . , on practical self-government, on professional and agrarian associations." He suggested the establishment of a "congress of representatives" of each of these groups as an almost grass-roots basis for civic life. The best example of such an organization of state and society Karsavin found, somewhat surprisingly for a former Eurasianist, in the United Kingdom, which "grew out of self-government and to the present day rests upon it," and where individuals still knew "how to relinquish their egoistic aspirations for the sake of the interests of society."<sup>64</sup>

Strikingly similar ideas were put forward in 1938 by another Eurasianist, the legal scholar N.N. Alekseev (1879–1964), who had joined the movement in 1926. With unprecedented frankness he rejected both liberal democracies and totalitarian regimes, because both disregarded the dignity of the human person as a spiritual being and in essence supported collectivism. In such regimes the highest value was the "physical collective, regardless which – race, the secular state, or communist society of the future." In Alekseev's view, communism and democracy shared the same false concept of the person as an egoistic and hedonistic individual. This concept led to an atomization and secularization of society and produced an individual "cut off from his social ties" and interested

in "material pleasures" only.<sup>65</sup> Alekseev strongly rejected the communist or fascist state's "totalitarian pretensions, its aspirations to impose the obligatory confession of one single ideology, which is tantamount to the suppression of the freedom of the human spirit and human thought." In sharp contrast to earlier Eurasianist statements, he renounced the very idea of a "single unitary party," which he now considered "a more terrible thing than the democratic multi-party system." Alekseev's alternative model for an ideal state remained rather general. He demanded that the authority of the state be based on the people, and that the supreme political authority be exercised by a permanent ruler under the constant control of the people and other state organs. The rights of the individual would be safeguarded by law and independent courts. Like Karsavin, Alekseev praised the Anglo-Saxon political model, in which "professional associations" rather than political parties dealt with "various current and organizational questions of state life."<sup>66</sup>

Between 1921 and the mid-1930s, Eurasianism had moved from the proclamation of Russia as a world apart to expressing certain sympathies for the political system of the United Kingdom. Initially, the Eurasianists had anticipated a new era of faith, in which religion would again take center stage, and Russia would resurrect the world; by the mid-1920s, Eurasianism had discovered the individual person and its defense as the crucial element of its mission.

The Eurasianists' bold historiosophical claims and passionate assertions in the early 1920s of Russia's religious mission were by-products of an emotional and speculative reaction to the experience of the Great War, the Russian Revolutions, and the Civil War. They believed only a new ideology, based on Orthodoxy and conscious of Eurasia's geographical, historical, and cultural character, could save Russia from uncritically imitating "the West," which they blamed for causing the revolutions. After the mid-1920s, however, the movement's religious pathos transformed itself slowly into a political program, finding its conceptual focal point in the affirmation of the person. The Eurasianists were convinced that only a state and society based on a genuine spiritual foundation could provide its citizens a dignified existence and allow them to express their God-given individuality without being exploited by an unbridled economy or the secular state and society. In western European liberal democracies, the individual was merely a depersonalized atom, deprived of originality. Moreover, the Eurasianists claimed that the individual person's spiritual potential could be fully realized only within larger collectives. Only as part of a higher "symphonic" person –

<sup>65</sup> N.N. Alekseev, "O budushchem gosudarstvennom stroe Rossii," *Novyi grad*, no. 13 (1938), 100–101.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 105–107.

<sup>64</sup> L.P. Karsavin, "Gosudarstvo i krizis demokratii," *Novyi mir*, no. 1 (1991), 193.

such as the nation, culture, state, or the church – could the individual find proper orientation and full freedom in his environment, thus escaping atomization, realizing his spiritual potential, and becoming a full-fledged integral person.

This demand for “intermediate” collective persons, the centerpiece of the Eurasianist “ideocratic” political system of thought, seemingly brought Eurasianism into close proximity with other contemporary organic ideologies, such as communism or fascism, which also tied the individual’s value to the value of the collective. In fact, however, Eurasianism’s religiously motivated “affirmation of the person” prevented the movement from explicitly depriving individual persons of their human dignity and from unambiguously subordinating them to the unqualified domination of collective persons. Furthermore, late in the 1920s, Eurasianists had begun to clarify their previously ambiguous ideas in this respect. After the rise of Stalin to power in the Soviet Union and the establishment of the National-Socialist dictatorship in Germany in 1933, individual Eurasianists distanced themselves not only from parliamentary democracy, as they had done before, but from totalitarianism as well.

The complex history of the religious foundations of Eurasianism and the movement’s ambiguous defense of the person and human dignity constitute a fascinating episode in Russian intellectual history, an episode that attests to the richness and productive power of the concept of the person in the history of Russian thought.

## Afterword

### ON PERSONS AS OPEN-ENDED ENDS-IN-THEMSELVES

(THE VIEW FROM TWO NOVELISTS AND  
TWO CRITICS)

CARYL EMERSON

If Russian philosophy is at heart a human story, one more resembling a quest for “integral worldviews” than an abstract system or set of logical propositions, can the great Russian novelists be said to practice a type of homeland philosophy? The idea has long intrigued readers. In 2002, James Scanlan published his controversial *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, which presented its subject as an anthropocentric theist probing the “mystery of man” (and the existence of God) by routes more compatible with Kant than with Russian Orthodox mysticism.<sup>1</sup> Lev Tolstoi, during his final decades, experimented with a vast array of fictional, memoiristic, and journalistic genres to communicate with his readership persuasively, intimately, in utmost sincerity – and his contribution to secular and religious philosophy has been a node of dispute and inspiration ever since.<sup>2</sup> But this close overlap, almost a palimpsest, between literary creativity and philosophy proper is of a special sort. It is not only that Russian novelists also wrote polemical treatises, the way Vladimir Solov'ëv “also wrote poems” and Sergei Bulgakov also produced insightful literary criticism. Rather, the very stuff of Russian fiction, its created heroes and worlds, has been recruited wholesale and reclassified as philosophy without changing a word, by later readers and even by the authors themselves.

<sup>1</sup> James P. Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). For an alternate view stressing the paradoxical, antinomic, ultimately idealistic nature of Dostoevskii’s faith, see Steven Cassedy, *Dostoevsky’s Religion* (Stanford University Press, 2005). Two other perspectives on Dostoevskii’s treatment of conversion, healing, and the challenge of a Living God are also highly valuable: Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky’s Unfinished Journey* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007) and Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Three indispensable and very different treatments of Tolstoian philosophy are Donna Tussing Orwin, *Tolstoy’s Art and Thought, 1847–1880* (Princeton University Press, 1993); Richard F. Gustafson, *Leo Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger* (Princeton University Press, 1986); and Inessa Medzhibovskaya, *Tolstoy and the Religious Culture of his Time: A Biography of a Long Conversion, 1845–1887* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

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**1830–1930**

Faith, Reason, and the Defense of  
Human Dignity

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*To George L. Kline*

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