

Igor S. Martynyuk

ENCOUNTERING RUSSIANNES IN PHILOSOPHY: THE HISTORIOSOPHICAL CONSERVATISM OF N.DANILEVSKY AND K.LEONTIEV. INTERPRETATIONS, ASSESSMENTS AND APPROACHES IN THE WESTERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

I do not reproach the Russians for being what they are,  
what I blame in them is their pretending to be what we are  
Marquis de Custine, Empire of the Czar:  
A Journey Through Eternal Russia, 1839

Being an educated and noble Frenchman, Marquis de Custine could easily justify his judgements and vision of what Europeanness really was and how it looked like. In the nineteenth century European mirror of Otherness, Russia's geographical image merged with the domain of Eastern backward lands excluded by philosophic geography from Europe proper and shifted to Asia. Produced within the strategic discourse, focussed on the Eastern question, and accompanied by the fundamental division of Europe between the culturally superior West and the inferior East, the theme of the "Asiatic barbarian at the gates of Europe" dominated the European constructions of Russia for almost two centuries. Given the self-sufficient character of such an attitude, there was no necessity of identifying of what Russianness precisely meant in terms of self-perception and mentality.

It was the twentieth century Europe's construction of Other, with the military ingredient of the Cold War discourse and Kulturkampf, that incorporated scholarly interpretations of the Russia's enigmatic image<sup>i</sup>. A lot of historical factors propelled the interest in Russian philosophy and social sciences. Yet this first serious encounter proved to be complicated for western scholars who, in some cases, could not guard themselves against temptation to revive the theme of the "irrational barbarian". However, in this sense, their motivation is not completely unreasonable.

As Vasilij Zen'kovsky noticed once, "Russian thought was entirely historiosophic", and "this exclusive and excessive attention to philosophy of history [in Russia], of course, was not accidental; obviously, it was rooted in those spiritual precepts that went from the Russian past, from national peculiarities of the "Russian soul"<sup>ii</sup>.

Russian historiosophy became a point of particular difficulty for western interpreters, for they encountered here with the knotty and complex material, especially in the cases when ideological, political, and cultural-historical views of some thinkers constituted a complex, but cohesive 'melting pot' where policy proposals were mixed with purely philosophical comprehension of the world history, ontology and epistemology of natural sciences; positive knowledge and phenomenological mode of thinking coexisted with religious beliefs and permeated the whole frame of a world-view; where existential experience realized itself in such a way that the whole Weltanschauung acquired tragic and remarkably pessimistic features. This pattern of thought-style is characteristic of the Russian nineteenth-century conservative philosophical tradition, and of N. Danilevsky's and K. Leontiev's historiosophies particularly.

Naturally, the conservative views of these philosophers had been variously interpreted. At least three basic western historiographical lines of interpretation, which emphasized respectively the cultural, psychological and political context, can be identified:

- a) conceptualization within the frame of the conservative romanticism and Slavophile tradition;
- b) socio-psychological interpretations;
- c) perception of Danilevsky's and Leontiev's views through the ideological prism of pan-Slavist tradition of the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the first case, the socio-cultural contextualization of the historiosophical concepts within the scheme of the disintegration of the Slavophile utopian conservative Weltanschauung, undoubtedly, represented one of the most successful efforts at historical interpretation.<sup>iii</sup> Conceiving the term Weltanschauung as a kind of structurally unified and coherent mental construct (thought-style) distinguished from the empirical intellectual constructions, or ideologies of other social groups, A.Walicki interpreted Russian nineteenth century conservative tradition as a specific historical romantic world-view that emerged in response to the challenges of modernity and the values of bourgeois liberalism and rationalism. A.Walicki lifted Leontiev's sociology and Danilevsky's historiosophy from the Slavophile conservative paradigm and ascribed their intellectual originality to the processes of the disintegration of Slavophilism in the 1870-80s that finally was superseded by a socio-political ideology of Pan-Slavism "seeking to achieve particular and limited aims and tending more and more to subordinate principles to practical considerations."<sup>iv</sup> The idea of the 'marginal' and 'transitory' status of Danilevsky's and Leontiev's historical views belonged to Walicki's later interpretation; the earlier one, represented in *History of Russian Thought* (1980),<sup>v</sup> methodologically resembled the approaches of the Soviet Marxist historians. Following the principles of the latter, Walicki placed critically historiosophical constructions of both thinkers into the social context of the epoch and then assessed them as 'reactionary' objectively and subjectively, as reactionary in content as well as in function (in situational sense.) In *The Slavophile Controversy* (1985), the term 'reactionary' has been replaced by cultural definitions, whereas the concepts of Danilevsky and Leontiev acquired mainly cultural meaning and dimension as the intermediate links in the process of the disintegration of the Slavophile world-view and its autonomization in the form of political ideology. According to Walicki, Leontiev and Danilevsky were the first amongst Russian thinkers who 'distorted' the core of the Slavophile doctrine by shifting the interests from cultural and religious to political issues and identifying the needs of the state with nationalism, pan-Slavism, or

interest in the Slavonic nations as carriers of superior moral principles ... and interest in Slavonic lands as a possible testing-ground for the Slavophile utopia ... gradually became narrowed down into speculation concerned only with the interests of Russia as a great power.vi

The unique systematic exposition of this transformation was Danilevsky's *Russia and Europe*. Its author, as Walicki admitted, undertook a complete revision of the Slavophile doctrine through rejecting universal values of the 'true Christianity' and substituting a glorified notion of statehood. Walicki uncovered a second, hidden shift in perspectives, namely, Danilevsky's differentiation of the spheres of competence of the 'individual' and 'national', 'statist'. This justification of Machiavellian approach allowed Danilevsky supposedly to preach on openly cynical attitude to international alliances.vii

According to Walicki, ideological divergence, however, did not constitute the peculiar features of Danilevsky's historiography. Rather its distinctiveness was primarily concentrated in the theory of 'cultural-historical types'. Walicki brilliantly traced the influences and sources that stood behind it. Like G.Florovsky in Russian historiography,viii he located the elements of Danilevsky's notions in A.Grigoriev's (1822–1864) romantic Schellingian aestheticism that identified the nations with the homogeneous organisms governed by their own necessities and specific laws of development, as a kind of critique of Hegelian 'instrumentalism' and its universal laws of evolution. The typical theory, elaborated by N.Danilevsky, not only followed this tradition, but also integrated the cyclical conception of historical time developed by I.Kireevsky. Undoubtedly, the main categories in such theories were supplied by a morphological point of view. The difference in Danilevsky's scheme was to replace aesthetic criteria with naturalistic ones.

Trying to interpret Danilevsky's version of Russian messianism in terms of Pan-Slavist tendencies, Walicki severed the notion of 'necessity' from the context of the civilizational approach and treated the 'messianism' in *Russia and Europe* as the conscious primary task, that is, voluntaristic policy. By doing this, he overlooked the serious role of morphological evolution of 'cultural types'. Messianic aims are not to be achieved by means of political activity, they are determined by the logic of civilizational development, according to Danilevsky. Yet such an underestimation of the underlying determinism in *Russia and Europe* is not the result of misunderstanding; it was Danilevsky himself who fell into the trap of assigning the priority to the historically predetermined necessity in his historiographical conceptualization.[I]

Pan-Slavist utopianism had been that very ground that connected Danilevsky's theory of cultural types with ultra-conservative romanticism of K.Leontiev, "the most original individual personality among extreme reactionaries of the reign of Alexander III," or "the last uncompromising defender of Russian, Western European . . . feudalism."x

Walicki picked out the appropriate 'key' concept in his interpretation, namely Leontiev's aristocratic aestheticism which is revealed in individuality; its prerequisite was "differentiation and therefore inequality"xi as the main criterion of the perception of history. It is reasonably that such liberal ideals as 'rational middle class happiness', the 'average man', 'universal progress' did not fit it and, moreover, became extremely alien to Leontiev's convictions. Obviously this aesthetic vision of the value of divergence also affected his theory of evolution of social organisms.

Having been Danilevsky's disciple, Leontiev, nevertheless, was as far from Pan-Slavists, as he was from Slavophiles. He was strongly opposed to the 'ecclesiastical democratism' of A.Khomiakov and to the Slavophile criticism of feudalism and Western aristocracy. Evidently, Walicki shared N.Berdiaev's belief that neo-Byzantinism of Leontiev's historiography represented the diametrical opposite of the Slavophile doctrine:

A cursory examination of Leontiev's views suffices to show that he was not a Slavophile in either the historical or the etymological meaning of the term.xii[II]

In general terms, the philosophy of history of both thinkers fits Walicki's mould of the conservative romanticism of the Russian nobility, founding its most original expression in Moscow Slavophilism in the 1840s.

Walicki was not the only proponent of the idea of the 'disintegrated' Slavophilism, first applied in historiography by P.Miliukov;xiii T.Masaryk used the same scheme, perceiving the theory of the cultural types as the expression of the later Slavophile 'biological' messianism:

Danilevsky instilled a few valuable drops of zoology of biologically based nationalism into the Slavophile philosophy of history. From biological nationalism it is but a step to biological patriotism to which many of the later Slavophiles succumbed.xiv

Masaryk attributed Danilevsky's notions of a decaying civilization to an earlier formulation implicit in Rousseau and Herder; what remained authentic is an entirely 'inadequate anthropological content' of Danilevsky's views (the definition of race, relations between race and nationality, racial classification.)xv

E.Thaden also accepted the idea of the disintegration, although in a modified form. The point of his departure was the mingling of Russian traditional nationalism, originated in the fourteenth century, with romantic conservatism and historicism with its "emphasis on the fundamental irrationality of reality, on national individuality, and on organic historical development," xvi that is concepts of Eutwicklungsgedanke and Volkstumlichkeit. The result of such an

integration in the mid nineteenth century in Russia Thaden called conservative nationalism. This term embraced a set of different Weltanschauungen of the later Slavophiles, pochvenniki, and pan-Slavists. Thaden associated Danilevsky's views with the flourishing phase of the tradition, and in terms of inspiration with pochvennichestvo of M.Dostoevsky, N.Strakhov and A.Grigoriev. Konstantin Leontiev parted company with K.Pobedonostsev and R.Fadeev in the 1880-90s when the nationalist theories fell into the stage of disintegration, when, according to Thaden, it became difficult "to apply the idealistic and humanitarian conceptions of Russian nationality to the concrete problems of Russian society." xvii While distinguishing two basic characteristics of Danilevsky's world of ideas, "his belief in the fundamental unity of things in nature and society as well as within the individual categories of the biological sciences; and his constant search for a system of laws that governed the development and existence of the phenomena of the external world," xviii Thaden defined the philosopher's originality as an effort to apply to history methodology of natural sciences. Through the influence of Karl Ernst von Baer, "Danilevsky became imbued with the spirit of German romanticism and idealism as applied to biology." xix The conception of birth and decay in history of civilizations, as it was represented in Russia and Europe, "is certainly suggestive of the influence of the morphological and organic interpretation of history and biology so common among German scholars" convinced that "the ages of man were to be reviewed as a 'historical sequence' from conception to death." xx

Being projected onto the realm of social sciences, Danilevsky's idea of the individual and incommensurable units in historical development, as Thaden pointed out, had ambiguously negative implications, such as justification of hostility between civilizational types by references to analogy in the world of the natural phenomena, and importantly, "the failure to give fairly acceptable and convincing characterizations of the spiritual principles of his ten civilizations," which according to the laws of their development had to be coherent in terms of language and nationality. The biological concept of development, suggested by Danilevsky, implied the cultural homogeneity of the civilizational principle, but in historical reality, for instance

ancient Semitic civilization . . . was originally developed by the non-Semitic Sumerians, whose agglutinative language was radically and fundamentally different from Assyrian, Babylonian, Phoenician,. . . and western European civilization has included peoples speaking such diverse languages as Norwegian, . . . Polish, Croatian and Slovenian.xxi[III]

Leontiev's historiosophy also embedded the influence of the natural sciences, however

the differences separating Leontiev's from Danilevsky and other conservative nationalists were just as striking as the similarities linked him to them. For one thing, Leontiev was the first Russian conservative thinker who fully realized the inherent difficulty involved in any attempt to combine modern nationalism with traditional Eastern Europe and Muscovite civilization.xxii

The understanding of the dilemma of modernization added to Leontiev's conception of history and his life remarkably pessimistic tones and finally made him accept the subjectively aesthetic interpretation of Byzantine cultural tradition.

Iver Neumann introduced the similar concept of 'romantic nationalism' in Russia and the Idea of Europe (1996), treating it as a constantly modified element in the process of constituting 'Other' throughout Russia's modern and contemporary history. According to his scheme, in the 1860-80s, after the military defeat and national humiliation in the Crimean War, the 'classical' (Slavophile) romantic nationalist position essentially radicalized towards 'revanchist' programme of pan-Slavism and turned away from Kireevsky's doctrine of the superior spirituality. The new ideological movement sustained the need to restore national pride by means of revenge, or gathering the Slav lands under the imperial tutelage; Danilevsky "brought a positivist, classificatory language" xxiii to this messianic aim and . . . excluded Europe from humanity, substituting the latter as a non-existent entity for the single Slavic cultural type as the only historical reality that was about to take the place of decaying Romano-German civilization. The nation-states as actors in international relations were subordinated to the notion of 'type', turned its particular embodiments. In terms of social psychology, Danilevsky's historiosophy, Neumann emphasized, was rather an intellectualized response typical for those human collectives which perceived themselves to be inferior to an out-group and responded to that situation by shifting the ground of comparison.xxiv

Whereas Danilevsky remained under the strong influence of positivism, Leontiev operated within the organicist paradigm and Dostoevsky's Christian framework.

Leontiev's understanding of organic nation appeared to be completely different from that one of the Slavophiles. To him, the idea which god has inscribed on each nation is of the essence, and the nation itself is merely a container for the idea. Russia was chosen to embody the Byzantine idea, where each estate's position is fixed irrevocably and each estate is thoroughly different from other. His concept of the nation is thus closer to the one inherent in official nationality than that of any other romantic nationalist.xxv

Yet neither E.Thaden nor I.Neumann considered seriously the existential and philosophical layer as a possible point of

departure in interpretations; for them it played a supplementary role, for the main focuses of their inquiries concentrated primarily on ideological aspects.

Bridging the gap between heterogeneous levels of sociability was the main goal of the researchers who elucidated the psychological and existential meaning that ideology had for its own creator and traced the links between the components of the ideology in his mind.

Following this analysis, S.Lukashevich transferred the focus to the socio-psychological motivation of Leontiev's historiosophy and separated its dominant constituent, 'heroic vitalism', [IV] "a faith, a dynamic Weltanschauung" xxvi born in existential despair.

It despises all optimistic systems. But it respects the facts and the masters of fact, and thereby surpasses pessimism. It is less a science of biology than a religion of metabiology, a religion of dionysian life and energy. Its roots are in the classical sociology of the Greeks, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, a sociology which regards society as a vital organism which compares culture to harmonious music, a human body, a ship, or a cosmic system. xxvii

In this view, a sort of existential frustration composed hidden layers of Leontiev's motivation that informed his historiosophy, sociology and the theory of state. Objectively, being concerned with the problem of social survival, Leontiev directed his ideology towards "an intellectual justification of the past, a condemnation of the present and a blueprint for a future which would restore the gentry (Leontiev's social stratum) to their glory." xxviii Subjectively, the problem of social mobility was added to the problems of his personal salvation and reconciliation of his maternal symbols, as the personification of his mother — Fear, Love, Aesthetics and Ultra-Conservatism — with religion. The 'ideational reconciliation' of the subjective and objective elements of motivation, according to S.Lukashevich, "yielded the key to the inner logic of Leontiev's thinking" xxix which was a product of

a dialectical struggle between 'reactionary aesthetics' and 'reactionary' love-dispensing religion based on fear. Leontiev had to prove, therefore, that the reactionary state he was advocating was the best guarantee for personal salvation. xxx

In ideological and historiosophical terms this meant justification of Byzantinism and the primacy of the state over the rights of an individual.

In the biographical study of Leontiev's ideas, George Ivask xxxi relied upon the same psychological factors, however, refusing to introduce any 'behavioural' explanatory concept. He found that Leontiev's historiosophical approaches derived intuitive insights from biological medical studies. "Methodologically, he was no less a determinist and materialist than Marx; but contrary to the author of *The Capital*, he departed not from economical factors, but from biological ones; and here he stands closer to H.Spencer" xxxii in equalizing the laws of natural and social morphology. Leontiev's conservatism is a vague term; "as a liberal-optimist he believed in the never-ending organic development, the dynamics of vital processes, whereas as an aesthetician-pessimist he shared the views that one could find in his hypothesis of entropy in history." xxxiii This ambivalence evidenced the break with the Christian philosophy of history. As an original and lonely thinker, Leontiev rather belonged to that 'great nineteenth-century counter-revolution' that "defended quality against quantity, the spirit against the matter, . . . nature against technicism, creativity against plutocracy, art against mass media. Goethe, Nietzsche, Joseph de Maistre, Carlyle, Donoso . . . took part in this counter-revolution as well." xxxiv Leontiev contributed to the nineteenth century conservatism existentially. What stood behind his political sociology and historiosophy is "always one and the same reality: beauty of life, which he defended more vigorously than other political projects . . . The only lesson he could give us is the art of life . . ." xxxv [V]

R.E.MacMaster xxxvi interpreted historiosophical insights of Russia and Europe as a product of Ressentiment (existential hatred) and the inner conflict between modernist and traditionalist tendencies within the mind of Danilevsky who experienced a kind of existential tragedy, being arrested as a member of Petrashevskian society and accused of anti-governmental activity. Psychologically, his typical theory, MacMaster argues, was "sublimated expression of his anger at himself; it allowed him to view his problems as external and general to his country and his time, rather than as internal and specific himself . . ." xxxvii In philosophical terms, Danilevsky's 'aggressive impulses of self-repression' xxxviii and self-denial pushed him to the border of the metaphysical totalitarian thinking. The true aim of Russia and Europe was neither the personal, nor the national, but the universal salvation and solution of the "metaphysical problem of man's alienation of God, nature, his fellows and himself" xxxix through the forceful political measures, a 'liturgy of destruction'. xl Thus, according to MacMaster, a Russian utopian socialist transformed himself into a radical left 'totalitarian metaphysician'. xli From the socio-psychological point of view, Danilevsky's doctrine was shaped in the struggle between

modern secular scientific culture and more tradition-oriented, sacramental culture, when a lonely man attempts to maintain the temper of the latter in the language of the former; when there is advocated the use of modern means to traditional ends; when such practice is regarded as providential or necessary. xlii

Danilevsky's theory, as a totalitarian response to the challenges of modernity, was overfilled with 'repressed feelings of vengefulness';xl<sup>iii</sup> MacMaster argued, it was rather amateurish and very ordinary intellectual blend of

angry, dated political pan-Slavist journalism, primitive . . . social science, Realpolitik, sentimental romanticism and populist utopian socialism, fanciful theology and philosophy of history and mad prophesy,xl<sup>iv</sup>

a doctrine "typologically similar to the ideas of forerunners of Stalin and Hitler."xl<sup>v</sup>

Amongst western scholars, R.MacMaster was the only who perceived Danilevsky as a left socialist radical and denied linear descent from the Slavophiles to the totalitarianism of Russia and Europe.

Needless to say, such an assertion as a whole is evidently subjective and tendentious. It entirely relies upon the exaggeration of Danilevsky's radicalism (a critique from the side of the liberals testifies the pro-conservative and non-socialist character of his philosophy; besides Danilevsky himself considered a Petrashevskian period in his life as a critical xl<sup>vi</sup>) and misunderstanding of the Russian nineteenth-century philosophical tradition. Being too vague and ideologically motivated at the same time, such terms as 'philosophical totalitarianism' and 'metaphysical radicalism'xl<sup>vii</sup> [VI] could hardly adequately comprehend the main themes of the Russian idealist philosophy. The arguments in favour of 'totalitarian and Bolshevik twists' of Dostoevsky, Soloviev, Danilevsky, or Berdiaevxl<sup>viii</sup> look really curious and made MacMaster's interpretation and conclusions preconceived and biased.

The ideologically prejudiced misunderstanding, that partly resulted in making stereotypes, touched upon another Danilevsky's magnum opus, Darwinism. A Critical Study. Major scholars studying the influence of Darwinian theories in Russian thought, perceived it mainly as an attempt "to illustrate the cultural subjectivity of scientific theories and to warn Russians against the importation of alien western values in the guise of positive knowledge."xl<sup>ix</sup> A.Vuchinich's judgement moved further in denying Danilevsky's scientific intentions that

relied upon ideology, translated into selected tenets of morality, as the primary source of criteria for selecting arguments and directing analysis. Danilevsky's attack on Darwinism was a special attack on 'nineteenth century science materialism' and an elaborate expression of the cosmic mission of Russian culture heralded by Russia and Europe . . .l

Thus 'messianic' ambiguities of Danilevsky's earlier work influenced assertions of his scientific studies.

The trend of socio-political contextualization could give us even more vivid examples that entered directly into the field of 'historical mythology'. The favourite themes in the western historiography in 1950-70s, Russian messianism and striking 'similarities' between anti-western aspirations of Leontiev and Danilevsky and Stalin's ideology, were not only the products of the aberration of historical perspective, but of the ideologically moulded thinking of the Cold War. In this sense, Leontiev could hardly be perceived in the other role than in that one of 'reactionary imperialist with a strong political will to power,'l<sup>i</sup> whereas Danilevsky as his predecessor had been turned into the precursor of no one else but Stalin and his tyranny.

Danilevsky was as deeply convinced as Stalin was seventy five years later that the Russian people pursued ideals opposite to the warlike and plutocratic spirit of the West.li<sup>i</sup>

Moreover, it appeared that the theory of the cultural types promoted the Cold War (!) ideology already in the nineteenth-century. "The messianic fervour, the Sendungsbewusstsein, the expectation of a decisive apocalyptic struggle against the alien world,"li<sup>ii</sup> were expressed so eloquently by Dostoevsky and Danilevsky as by no one else.l<sup>iv</sup> The function of Danilevsky's historiosophical notions was completely pragmatic: "to invest . . . understanding of Russian messianism with specific respectability"l<sup>v</sup> and justify 'Manichean conception of history and adoption of Bismarckian Realpolitik. Danilevsky's and Leontiev's Pan-Russianism "complemented the expansive foreign policy of the state under the camouflage of Pan-Slavism."l<sup>vi</sup> [VII]

H.Kohnl<sup>vii</sup> in a similar manner considers notions and concepts of N.Danilevsky strictly within the mainstream of Russian messianic pan-Slavic thought, which is also regarded as a specific cultural response to the processes of the unification of Germany and German imperialistic ideologies.[VIII] He refused to see any kind of novelty of Russia and Europe in terms of Slavophile ideology, since Danilevsky's doctrine hardly presented new viewpoints beyond those professed by Pogodin and Tyutchev. It was rather "the first comprehensive treatise presenting the subject in the framework of a general history of civilizations."l<sup>viii</sup> Danilevsky's civilizational approach was reinterpreted version of the cyclic theory of successive cultural types, 'invented' by the German historian Heinrich Ruckert (1823-1879). Yet Kohn's 'insight' here is neither original nor important; he simply follows V.I.Soloviev's criticism of the Slavophile theories, and accusations of the scientific plagiarism that appeared in Russia and Europe.[IX]

The scientific 'shell' of the theory of cultural types was of little importance, Kohn argued. What it gave was 'feeling of clothing . . . social and cultural observations and . . . predictions of the future with the coat of objective necessity."l<sup>ix</sup> More precisely it offered not a picture of reality in its complex texture but a mirror of the emotions, fears and hopes animating certain civilizations at given times. Emotional perception (Danilevsky's fear of Germanism) had become the starting point of Kohn's interpretation. It explained the emergence of the doctrine of European hostility towards Russia

and formed the ground for apology of the idea of the peculiar spiritual nature of Slavic civilization. Danilevsky pacified his historical fears in the notion of the morphological diversities. Finally it occurred that

European civilization was only a product of history, nothing universal and final; it was as one-sided as other civilizations had been and like them subject to the law of growth and decay.<sup>lx</sup>

Moreover, peculiar spiritual features of the Slav type, derived from the principle of pacific social organization — the original pattern of Rousseau-Herder historiosophical thought <sup>lxi</sup> — were mixed with traditional Slavophile conviction that any attempt to introduce alien western civilizational element would threaten the originality of Slavdom.

Another, much more important point in Kohn's interpretation is a geopolitical dimension of Danilevsky's historiosophy. He notes at least two remarkable facts about Danilevsky's pan-Slavic union. The first, and the most conspicuous is that suggested frontiers of the federation as they were depicted in Russia and Europe, realized in 1945, after post-war divisions according to the Yalta agreements. The second is that Danilevsky's complaints about the Russification of potential allies within the federation and his persistent attempts to prove that Russia will play a positive role in the future union by means of emphasizing respective attitude towards their inner autonomy, were later on used successfully by Lenin who intended to show that Russia was neither imperialist nor an oppressor. Unfortunately, Kohn avoids comments on these coincidences, just trying to compare implicitly pan-Slavic and Marxist doctrines. The emergence of the mighty Slavic cultural type through the development of Slavdom reminded him of promises of the ideal society which Marx expected at the same time through the development of proletariat.<sup>lxii</sup> These comparative characteristics are superficial in reality. Apart from the fact that they share the same utopian expectations, whether cultural or social, two doctrines differed from each other. More comprehensive explanation in terms of geopolitical units, their tendencies and historical weight, had been neglected by Kohn.

Searching for the similarities in both ideologies, he reduces Russian messianism to the promise of a perfect social order in its typically Marxist form. This is nothing but misinterpretation of the notion of 'mono- and multielemental types'. The socio-economic foundations were never separated or overestimated in Europe and Russia; pro-Marxist messianic social eschatology was entirely alien to Danilevsky. This reason makes it impossible to limit the place of 'cultural types' theory by oscillations between pan-Orthodoxy ("the faith in true Christianity as the only source of salvation") and pan-Communism ("the faith in the true social doctrine as the only source of salvation"<sup>lxiii</sup>), as Kohn tries to do. He rather substitutes the real for the desirable, as long as pan-Slavism of Danilevsky rejected the Slavophile religious utopianism and sacrificed the significance of Orthodoxy. Danilevsky transformed the latter into one of the ingredients of a 'distinct' culture or type. "The difference in the cultural principles of the Russian people and the majority of other Slavic people from the Germano-Roman peoples consists of the fact," Danilevsky argued, "that the former confess Orthodoxy and the latter confess Roman Catholicism or Protestantism."<sup>lxiv</sup> Certainly, the theory of 'cultural types' promoted neither the social messianism nor the religious one; it was much more than an answer to the centralised Germany and pan-Germanism; rather it was "a challenge to European civilization based upon an interpretation of history. . . which claimed the validity of a universal law."<sup>lxv</sup> This assertion of Kohn is more accurate.

P.Christoff<sup>lxvi</sup> brought about a detailed examination of some aspects of Russian Pan-Slavism with an intention of pointing out the similarities and differences between ideologies of Moscow Slavophilism and Pan-Slavism in its versions of Leontiev and Danilevsky. The general trend was regarded as both cultural and political reaction to Italian and German nationalism. It was exactly pan-Germanism of Bismarck and the Drang nach Osten that accompanied the rise of Russian messianism. All these national ideologies experienced the same destiny and were, as P.Christoff noticed, synthetic and esoteric, and besides, lacked the inspiration and driving force of genuine mass movements.<sup>lxvii</sup> The ideas they respectively promoted (Pan-German empire, all-Slav unity from the Adriatic sea to the Pacific Ocean) never had been a historical reality, and that is more characteristic, both "were born of the dreams and fantasies of a handful of theoreticians."<sup>lxviii</sup> While comparing Slavophile and pan-Slavic notions, P.Christoff revealed that the last was also never homogeneous. In reality there were different responses to the European political challenges: pan-Slavism, pan-Orthodoxy, pan-Russianism, pan-Byzantinism that passed into their own messianisms.<sup>lxix</sup> The first one, as a mainstream movement, was rather a conditional phenomenon, since it manifested itself diversely in a number of individual exponents, having no foundations in the form of the complete system of views. From this perspective, Danilevsky's Russia and Europe is not an exception. Christoff found its 'originality' in two distinguished features. Danilevsky built up the main concepts by concentrating on political context, or by responding to the military and political behaviour of the West, whereas his predecessors in the Slavophile milieu responded more characteristically to the western cultural values in general. Thus, Christoff summed up, "Danilevsky's pan-Slavism cannot be severed from the powerful wave of pan-Germanism."<sup>lxx</sup>[X]

Another 'peculiar difference' is a primarily secular and scientific basis of the theory of cultural types. Obviously, Danilevsky, being a natural scientist, had a different mentality and consequently different bias from that of the Slavophiles who had not been experienced in physical sciences.<sup>lxxi</sup> However this fact gives Christoff a reason to consider Danilevsky's theory as purely materialistic despite the fact that he was a believing Orthodox Russian. It is true that his view substantially lack the heavy Orthodox 'slant', but one cannot affirm that God does not act in Danilevsky's 'system' of types. In Russia and Europe the Deity exposes Himself through the aesthetic and teleological criteria deriving from the distinctiveness of civilizational types. "The need for beauty is the sole spiritual need that matter alone can satisfy," Danilevsky wrote, "God desired to create beauty and therefore he created matter."<sup>lxxii</sup> God is the hidden force of

historical processes. In its main trends, history, according to Danilevsky, does not develop in correspondence with human will, which is able only "to distort or delay temporarily the fulfilment of the plan drawn out by the hand of the Providence, but in any case it would be completed in the other, more roundabout ways."lxxiii

A different explanatory 'model' is used by Christoff in his interpretation of Leontiev's views – the latter were withdrawn from the frame of pan-Slavist ideology. What might be emerged from them is "a strong, uncompromising Byzantinism and perhaps a somewhat milder Turkism."lxxiv Byzantinism, as "a special type . . . of culture, having its distinguished marks, its general, clear, sharp comprehensive principles, and its definite consequences in history,lxxv represented a complete and well-defined entity, as Christoff pointed out, which had been opposed to the notion of Pan-Slavism, Slavianism that meant nothing, but "tribal ethnographic abstraction . . . and idea of common blood and similar languages."lxxvi

This conclusion seemed to be reasonable, as long as Leontiev himself believed, that there was a lack of cultural values in the history of Slavdom and that any kind of unity based exclusively on the principle of soil and blood was unrealistic. It was his 'Great Russianism' and 'gentry consciousness', his "profound veneration for an immovable . . . Byzantinism based on quasi-religious and quasi-pagan . . . convictions", as Christoff noticed, that made him "remarkably blind and deaf to the flow and demands of contemporary life."lxxvii However, such an assumption is not complete; even more, it strives to include all the complexities of the exegesis in the single focus. If one would turn it around and concentrate on Leontiev's aesthetical perceptions, the picture would look differently: the original source of Byzantinism appeared to be in the aesthetics of diversity, in the beauty of historical tragedies. Leontiev's hatred of egalitarian progress and democracy was a consequence of the romantic aesthetization of history, a response to the challenging liberal modernization. Besides, pan-Byzantinism was not the only component of Leontiev's conservative historiosophy. He assumed that Slavic civilization had perspectives to convert itself into Slavic-Asian civilizational type through the absorption of Turanic elements, as far as it was important to find the counterweight to the Romano-Germanic cultural type. That is the point where Byzantinism is being transformed into Eurasianism as it was later on promoted in the form of the alternative national ideology by N.Trubetzkoy and P.Savitsky. P.Christoff missed this key linkage that could explain why Leontiev's 'narrow and idiosyncratic Byzantinism' pushed him into the isolated intellectual opposition.

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The major approaches of cultural and socio-political contextualization, reviewed above, have both their deficiencies and advantages as well. Such concepts as 'messianic pan-Slavism', 'conservative romanticism', 'pan-Byzantinism' fixed stable ideological characteristics of historiosophical constructions in terms of influences and their inner originality. However, the socio-cultural aspect that constitute their essential dynamic elements is missing.[XI] A.Walicki, P.Christoff, H.Kohn treat the notions of 'cultural-historical types', 'Byzantinism', etc. exclusively as the 'static' ones, as locked up within the mainstream of patterns of thought in the nineteenth century. The cultural implications of these patterns that shaped Russian national self-identification and fitted the channels of the nineteenth century nationalist discourse, have been left outside the interpretations.

It is difficult to preserve a balance and trace the links between cultural and ideological layers of such complex world-views in the interpretations. Socio-political conceptualization of this phenomenon tended to refine its meaning and exaggerate its political and nationalist connotations, and, consequently, to annihilate the cultural context outside and the role of cultural (philosophical) components within Danilevsky's and Leontiev's historiosophical constructions. The same happened in the case when the conceptual richness of their historiosophies has been reduced to the level of the narrow empirical ideologies, being subordinated to the purposes of political conjuncture.

Indeed, reactionary views of Leontiev, detached from the concepts of 'diversity-in-unity' and organic development, and finally his aestheticism, look absurd, incongruous and unlikely. Danilevsky's 'messianic Pan-Slavism', taken out of the context of his theory of cultural types and philosophy of organicism, his notion of 'natural identity', could really produce the impression of 'totalitarian threat', intensified by means of ideological labelling and reconsidering his views through the prism the modern categories applied in twentieth-century European political sciences (!).

The ideologically motivated comprehension (and understanding) of Russian multi-faceted cultural conservatism and its philosophy too easily gives the way to temptations of reductionism and simplified assertions, or simply withdraws them from the sphere of humanitarian knowledge and deprives this thought-styles of the right to be authentically rational, declaring their "visionary, shamanistic, magical"lxxviii essence and blind "biological determinism."lxxix

Yet, apart from historiographical 'abuses' and misunderstanding, there was something strikingly similar in the destinies of the conservative thinkers, either Russian or European, who combined philosophy of culture, aesthetics, metahistory and politics. It was a distinct eschatological stamp of intellectual isolation and sacred martyrdom that sometimes went beyond earthly life and became posthumous.

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<sup>i</sup> See: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994), and Iver B. Neumann, *Russia as Europe's Other* (Florence, 1996), EUI Working Paper, n. 34

<sup>ii</sup> Vasilij Zen'kovsky, *Istoriia Ruskoi Filosofii* (St.Petersburg, 1991), vol.1, pt.1, p. 16-17

<sup>iii</sup> Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of Conservative Utopia in the Nineteenth Century Russian Thought* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1989)

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14

<sup>v</sup> Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

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1980)

vi Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy* . . . p. 502-503

vii Ibid., p.506

viii See: G.Florovsky, *Puti Russkogo Bogosloviia* (Kiev, 1991), p. 305

ix Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought* . . . p. 294

[I] This aspect of Danilevsky's theory is the most vulnerable. Sometimes his scheme really turns into "a mixture of deterministic and voluntaristic elements," as M.Boro-Petrovich called it, for it is unclear to what extent the laws of the development of 'types' define the development of Slavic civilization and to what extent human choice does so. See: M.Boro-Petrovich, *The Emergence of Russian Pan-Slavism* (Westport, 1985), p.76

x Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy* . . . p. 517

xi Ibid., p. 519

xii Ibid., p. 523-524

[II] Walicki's judgement is acceptable only on the condition that the focus becomes the versatility of both Leontiev's concepts and personality, and that is true. While noticing in Pan-Slavist nationalism a mask for egalitarian tendencies, the admirer of the aestheticism in history distinguished, however, cultural (Orthodox) and liberal (oriented on the idea of "tribal nationality") Panslavism and, of course, rejected the latter due to its harmful impact on cultural distinctiveness. Therefore Leontiev did not renounce Panslavism as a trend of thought, but transformed it in the same way as Danilevsky recombined ideas of the early Slavophiles on the natural-scientific basis; Leontiev did the same on the aesthetic level.

xiii See: P.Miliukov, *Disintegration of Slavophilism. Danilevsky, Leontiev and Vladimir Soloviev* (Moscow, 1893)

xiv Thomas G.Masaryk, *The Spirit of Russia* (London, 1961),vol.1, p.293

xv Ibid., pp. 283, 318

xvi Edward C.Thaden, *Conservative Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century Russia* (Seattle, 1964), p.4

xvii Ibid., p. 129

xviii Ibid., p. 104

xix Ibid., p. 105

xx Ibid.

xxi Ibid., p. 106

[III] Such a discrepancy between the concept and reality has been first noticed by VI.Soloviev; see: Vladimir S.Soloviev, "Nikolay Yakovlevich Danilevsky, Konstantin Leontiev" in VI.S.Soloviev, *Sobranie Sochineniy* (Moscow, 1990), vol.2.

xxii Ibid., p. 167

xxiii Iver B.Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study In Identity and International Relations*. (London, 1996), p.55

xxiv Ibid.

xxv Ibid., p. 66

[IV] The term introduced first by Eric Bentley in *A Century of Hero Worship. A Study of the Idea of Heroism in Carlyle and Nietzsche, with Notes on Wagner, Spengler, Stefan George, and D.H.Lawrence* (New York, 1944)

xxvi S.Lukashevich, *Konstantin Leontiev, 1831– 1891: A Study in Russian 'Heroic Vitalism'* (New York, 1967), p. xiv

xxvii Ibid.

xxviii Ibid., p. 105

xxix Ibid., p. 136

xxx Ibid., p. 105

xxxi Yurii P. Ivask, "Konstantin Leontiev (1831-1891). Zhizn' I Tvorchestvo" in *K.N.Leontiev: Pro et Contra. Lichnost' i Tvorchestvo Konstantina Leontieva v Otsenke Russkikh Mysliteley i Issledovateley*. Ed. A.P.Kozyrev, and A.A.Korol'kov (St.Petersburg, 1995), vol.2

xxxii Ibid., p. 428

xxxiii Ibid., p. 430

xxxiv Ibid., p. 443

xxxv Ibid. p.520

[V] R.Hare was amongst those who shared the opposite opinion; to him Leontiev was "the first Russian thinker to question the scientific and factual evidence supporting the prevalent Western faith in the all-round social progress and gradual perfectibility of human beings. In this respect, especially in his bold application of judgements of value to large-scale comparative studies of historical civilizations, he deserves to be recognized as a worthy precursor of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee." See: Richard Hare, *Pioneers of Russian Social Thought. Studies of Non-Marxist Formation in the Nineteenth Century Russia and of Its Partial Revival in the Soviet Union*. (London, 1951), p. 276

xxxvi Robert E.MacMaster, *Danilevsky: A Russian Totalitarian Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1967)

xxxvii Ibid., p. 137

xxxviii Ibid., p. 131

xxxix Ibid., p. 161

xl Ibid., p. 294



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- xli Ibid., p. 292, 295
- xlii Ibid., p. 145
- xliiii Ibid., p. 131, 133
- xliv Ibid., p. 119
- xliv Ibid., p. 298
- xlvi K.V.Sultanov, *Filosofsko-sotsiologicheskaya Sistema N.Ya.Danilevskogo i ee Tolkovanie v Sovremennoi Burzhuaaznoy Filosofii: Kriticheskiy Analiz. Avtoreferat Dissertatsii* (Leningrad, 1975), p. 10
- xlvii Robert E.MacMaster, *Danilevsky: A Russian Totalitarian Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 304
- [VI] In addition, the problem of 'alienation', constituting the core of Danilevsky's totalitarian thinking in MacMaster's interpretation, has been raised neither on the metaphysical nor on the historiosophical level in Danilevsky's writings.
- xlviii Ibid., p. 274, 304
- xliv Daniel P.Todes, *Darwin Without Malthus. The Struggle for Existence in Russian Evolutionary Thought* (Oxford, 1989), p. 44
- <sup>1</sup> Alexander Vuchinich, *Darwin in Russian Thought* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 131
- li Janko Lavrin, *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* (London, 1969), p. 137
- lii H.Kohn, "Russia and the West. Danilevsky" in *The Mind of Modern Russia*. Ed. H.Kohn (New York, 196), p. 193
- liii H.Kohn, "Dostoevsky and Danilevsky. Nationalist Messianism" in *Continuity and Change in Russian and Soviet Thought*. Ed. Ernest, and J.Simmons (New York, 1967), p. 506
- liv Ibid., p. 501
- lv Taras Huncsak, "Pan-Slavism or Pan-Russianism" in *Russian Imperialism From Ivan the Terrible to the Revolution*. Ed. T.Huncsak (New Jersey, 1974), p. 101
- lvi Ibid., p. 105
- [VII] See the similar assertions in Michael Boro-Petrovich, *The Emergence of Russian Pan-Slavism. 1856 – 1870* (Westport, 1985), Janko Lavrin, *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* (London, 1969), Frank Fadner, *Seventy Years of Pan-Slavism in Russia: From Karazin to Danilevsky* (Washington D.C., 1962)
- lvii H.Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (New York, 1960)
- [VIII] The interpretations in terms of challenges and responses started first by H.Seton-Watson in his *The Decline in Russian Empire, 1855-1914*, where he drew out parallels between 'Greater Germanism', 'pan-German imperialism' on the one hand and 'Greater Russianism' and Russo-pan-Slav imperialism and its ideological foundations on the other. See: H.Seton-Watson, *The Decline of Russian Empire, 1855-1914* (London, 1952), p.51
- lviii H.Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (New York, 1960), p. 191
- [IX] Robert MacMaster places under the doubt the validity of Soloviev's arguments in favour of the influences of H.Ruckert's work on Danilevsky's theory of cultural-historical types. See: Robert E.MacMaster, "The Question of H.Rückert's Influence on N.Danilevskij" in *The American Slavic and East European Review* (February, 1965), vol. 14, pp. 59-66.
- lix H.Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (New York, 1960), p. 192
- lx Ibid., p. 194
- lxi Ibid., p. 195
- lxii Ibid., p. 207
- lxiii Ibid., p. 207-208
- lxiv N.Danilevsky, *Rossiia i Evropa* (St.Petersburg, 1889), p. 212. Quoted in M.Petrovich-Boro, *The Emergence of Russian Pan-Slavism* (Westport, 1985), p. 85
- lxv H.Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (New York, 1960), p. 208
- lxvi See: Peter K. Christoff, *Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Russian Slavophilism. Yu.Samarin* (Oxford, 1991)
- lxvii Ibid., p. 403
- lxviii Ibid.
- lxix Ibid., p. 402
- lxx Ibid., p. 408
- [X] It is also noteworthy that P.Christoff marked the significance of *geopolitical* elements in Danilevsky's theory, since the historical and cultural-religious importance of Constantinople and the Straits was of primary concern for all pan-Slavic theoreticians and Russian publicists from I.Aksakov to R.Fadeev.
- lxxi Ibid.
- lxxii N.Danilevsky, *Rossiia i Evropa. Vzglyad na Kul'turnye i Politicheskie Otmosheniia Slavianskogo Mira k Germano-Romanskomu* (Russia and Europe. A View of the Cultural and Political Relations of the Slavic with the Germano-Roman World) (St.Petersburg, 1889), p.xxx-xxxi. Quoted in A.Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of Conservative Utopia in the Nineteenth Century Russian Thought* (Notre Dame,Ind., 1989), p. 514
- lxxiii N.Danilevsky, *Russia and Europe* (Moscow, 1991), p. 308
- lxxiv P.Christoff, *Introduction to Nineteenth Century Russian Slavophilism. Yu.Samarin* (Oxford, 1991). p. 413
- lxxv Ibid.
- lxxvi Ibid., p. 413-414

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<sup>lxxvii</sup> Ibid., p. 414

\* In reality, Leontiev's 'messianism' more resembled *cultural isolationism* in time ("to freeze up Russia"), than chauvinistic political nationalism, whereas Danilevsky's variant has been fully dissolved in the mixture of the concept of organic monarchism, *Realpolitik* and his ideal of tetra-elemental Slavic cultural type. These types of 'messianism' had little similarity both to the Slavophile church massianism and H.Kohn's apocalyptic *Sendungsbewusstsein*. Due to the dominance of cultural layers, Leontiev's and Danilevsky's historiosophies were too multifaceted to be enveloped into the simplified mould of ideological labels such as 'nationalism, or 'pan-Slavism' which was, rephrasing M.Boro-Petrovich's terminology, nothing but the shell of his typical history, one of the poles in Danilevsky's world-view.

<sup>[XII]</sup> For instance, the application of purely political criterion of identification, constituted one of the basic weaknesses in Walicki's interpretation. Politically understood conservatism in the case of Danilevsky's and Leontiev's historical views is a vague term; their willingness to 'freeze' the Russian cultural development and to fence it off liberal Europe on the one hand, intermingled with sympathies towards the Polish uprising in 1863, foreign and domestic policies of Peter the Great and even ... Catherine's epoch of 'liberalism', and finally with the strong opposition towards the Russification of the western borderlands (Baltic provinces and Poland) on the other hand. In purely political terms it is hardly possible to define the crucial component in these attitudes: 'conservatism', 'liberalism', 'imperialism', 'nationalism' . . . Anyway there is a little sense to assess them as functional reactionary. True, empirical reactionaries, as N.Berdiaev noticed once, were always the representatives of petty bourgeoisie. Danilevsky and Leontiev doubted seriously about the future of Russia, unlike the real reactionaries in thought and practice.

<sup>lxxviii</sup> R.E. MacMaster, *Danilevsky: A Russian Totalitarian Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 251

<sup>lxxix</sup> Edward C.Thaden, *Conservative Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century Russia* (Seattle, 1964), p. 114