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## Geopolitics, War and Metamorphoses of Empire (1895–1921): Petr Savitskii and the Birth of Eurasianism

### 1. Between the Specter of Collapse and the Hope of Expansion – the Russian Empire between Europe and Asia (1895–1914)

When does the First World War begin? From the shots of the Serbian assassin, taking the life of the successor to the Austro-Hungarian throne? From the decision of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the political-military elite of the German Empire, to risk a great conflict with Russia and France? From the announcement of mobilization by Russia? From the British Government's decision not to leave German aggression towards neutral Belgium unanswered? One can delve into an entire library of studies (again rapidly expanding due to the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War) devoted to attempts to answer these questions. Tied to them, the famous *Schuldfrage* – the question of responsibility for the war and the hecatomb that it entailed – obviously has a wider dimension than just the personal, concerning the decisions of individual politicians, German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and British. Is the arms race the culprit or perhaps the “logic” of alliances, geopolitics, nationalism or imperialism?<sup>1</sup>

We will not seek the guilty here. Instead I would like to extend the perspective of the analysis of the Great War a bit, looking for the intellectual, political and cultural clues foreshadowing its outbreak in the two decades preceding

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<sup>1</sup> Of the newer, relevant voices in this debate, see, among others: A. Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus*, London, 2002; J.G.C. Röhl, *Wilhelm II. Into the Abyss and Exile, 1900–1941*, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 814–1107 (a renewal of the thesis of German guilt); S. McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, Cambridge, MA, 2011 (a radical thesis about Russian imperialism being mainly responsible for the outbreak of the First World War); C. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London, 2012 (a similar thesis, but in a much milder form); D. Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London, 2015 (a defense of imperial Russia against such an accusation – instead an indication of the main “culprit” in the phenomenon of intensifying ethno-nationalisms).

it that have not been adequately revealed so far. At the same time, I would like to reflect on its consequences, which reveal themselves (to this day) in the ideologies emerging from the shadow of this war. We will look at these issues from the point of view of the experiences of Russia and Eastern Europe, the tensions in this area arising between nationalisms (“national projects”) and the rapidly changing structure of the Russian Empire in this period. It is precisely between nationalism and Russian imperialism, considered in the geopolitical context, that a special view of these experiences and changes is found, that could provide an answer to the question of how Russia was to survive the crisis of war and revolution, rediscovering anew its justification as an empire. This vision, again exceptionally popular today in Russia and known as the ideology of Eurasianism, we would like to follow here *in statu nascendi* – in an attempt to recreate the historical framework for the formation of the geopolitical thought of Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii, the main (next to Nikolai Trubetskoi) “constructor” of this ideology.

Why Savitskii? Although Eurasianism enjoys great interest as an ideology, among researchers, especially in recent years,<sup>2</sup> the co-creator of its “canon” has not yet been the subject of an exhaustive monograph – although several attempts have been made.<sup>3</sup> However, the intellectual biography of the pioneer

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<sup>2</sup> Of the most important Polish monographs on the subject of Eurasianism: R. Bäcker, *Międzywojenny eurazjatyzm. Od intelektualnej kontrakulturacji do totalitaryzmu?*, Łódź, 1999; I. Massaka, *Eurazjatyzm. Z dziejów rosyjskiego misjonizmu*, Wrocław, 2001; discussion of the state of research in world historiography: S. Glebov, “Wither Eurasia? History of Ideas in an Imperial Situation”, *Ab Imperio*, 2008, no. 2, pp. 345–376; see also, among others: M. Laruelle, *L'idéologie eurasiiste russe ou comment penser l'empire*, Paris, 1999; S. Wiederkehr, *Die Eurasische Bewegung. Wissenschaft und Politik in der russischen Emigration der Zwischenkriegszeit und im postsowjetischen Russland*, Köln, 2007; *Russia between East and West. Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism*, ed. D. Shlapentokh, Leiden, 2007 (here, among others, relevant articles by S. Wiederkehr, R. Paradowski, R. Bäcker); C. Глебов, *Евразийство между империей и модерном*, Москва, 2010; *Empire de/Centered: New Spatial Histories of Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. by S. Turoma, M. Waldstein, London, 2013 (here, among others, an interesting interpretations of S. Glebov, I. Torbakov, M. Laruelle); *The Politics of Eurasianism. Identity, Popular Culture and Russia's Foreign Policy*, ed. by M. Bassin, G. Pozo, London and Lanham 2017.

<sup>3</sup> В.Ю. Быстряков, *В поисках Евразии: общественно-политическая и научная деятельность П.Н. Савицкого в годы эмиграции (1920–1938 гг.)*, Самара, 2007; the newer Russian literature on the subject is competently discussed by А.М. Матвеева, *Геополитическая концепция истории России П.Н. Савицкого*, Москва, 2016; see also: S. Glebov, “A Life with Imperial Dreams: Petr Nikolaevich Savitsky, Eurasianism, and the Invention of Structuralist Geography”, *Ab Imperio*, 2005, no. 3, pp. 299–329; fundamental bibliographic work was carried out by M. Beisswenger (whom I sincerely thank here for making available this rare publication):

of Eurasianism is not the only thing interesting to us here. We want to show a fragment, from the birth of Savitskii in 1895, to 1921, when he formulates a fully mature vision of the new Russian imperial ideology as a specific point of focus for various phenomena and events from the political, social and cultural planes in Russia and Eastern Europe. In his vision, the center is the Great War and the great transformations connected with it on the political and mental maps of the twentieth century. Whether this point has been well chosen, it will be possible to judge after reading the following text.

Petr Savitskii, was born on 15 May (O.S. 3 May) 1895 in Chernigov (today's Chernihiv, Ukraine). His parents came from the Little Russian noble families of this region. His mother was Uliana Andreevna née Khodot (her maternal grandfather was Mikhail Dolinskii); his father was Nikolai Petrovich, a marshal of nobility of the Krolevetskii *uiezd* [district] of the Chernigov Governorate, then later (from 1906) chairman of the *Zemskaia uprava* [administrative board of *Zemstvo* – a local self-government] of that governorate, and from 1915 a member of the State Council. The family took pride in their Cossack traditions, in which there was a place for both a coat of arms, allegedly bestowed by the Polish king in the fifteenth century, for bravery shown in battle against the Turks, and the remembrances of Colonel Savitskii, who as a “bunchuk comrade” (*khорunzhii*) participated in the expedition of Peter the Great to Persia in 1717.<sup>4</sup>

The little homeland, in which the co-creator of Eurasianism was firmly rooted, was Chernigov province – a Rus' territory, at the junction of today's borders of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. The Cossack heritage had been rooted there since the fifteenth century, on the borderland between the political (and cultural) influences of Moscow/Russia and Lithuania/the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Ultimately, Chernigov was handed over to Russia by the Commonwealth as part of the Truce of Andrusovo (1667).

Interesting data about this land, and, above all, its inhabitants, at the time of Savitskii's birth, was obtained thanks to information from the first general census of the population of the Russian Empire from 1897; specifically on the

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*Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii (1895–1968): A Bibliography of his Published Works*, Prague, 2008; cf. id., “Metaphysics of the Economy: The Religious and Economic Foundations of P.N. Savitskii's Eurasianism”, in: *Between Europe & Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism*, ed. by M. Bassin, S. Glebov, M. Laruelle, Pittsburgh, 2015, pp. 97–112; this author is preparing a complete academic biography of Savitskii, based partly on his doctoral thesis, defended in 2009 at the University of Notre Dame in Illinois.

<sup>4</sup> А.Н. Кренке [sister of P.N. Savitskii], *Воспоминания*, Москва, 2010, pp. 8–9. В.Ю. Быстрыков, op. cit., pp. 18–23.

territory of the Chernigov Governorate (52,000 km<sup>2</sup>), where 2.3 million people resided at that time. Of these, 496,000 declared Russian (Great Russian) as their native language, while more than three times as many inhabitants (1.53 million) indicated – the “Little Russian” (*Malorossiiskii*) language, meaning Ukrainian. Belarusian was given as the native language of 151,000 residents of the governorate, “Jewish” – 113,000, Polish – 3,300. Putting the proportions into percentages: in the governorate, which could easily be regarded as an element of the stable center of the Russian character of the Empire, two-thirds of the population described their language not as Russian but as “Little Russian”. The Russians, or in any case the Russians in the narrower, “linguistic” sense of the word, here constituted scarcely a quarter of the total population.

And on the scale of the entire empire? The census showed that at the beginning of 1897, Tsar Nicholas II had 125.6 million subjects. However, only 55.5 million of them used Russian as their native language, 22.4 million – “Little Russian”, 5.9 million – Belarusian. It turned out that, if we consider the language criterion as significant, as a potential focus of modern national identity, then the Russians constituted a distinct minority in the Russian Empire, only about 44 per cent. Only if you count all of those who speak “Little Russian” and “Belarusian” to them, the “greater” Russian nation would account for two-thirds of the total population of the empire. Poles, Jews, Tatars, as well as Muslims (with various regional dialects) are additional, millions-strong minorities, next to dozens of others, numbering from several hundred thousand to slightly more than a million (here, among others, the Baltic nations of Lithuanians, Latvians, as well as “people of the Finnish languages”, Armenians, Georgians) and many dozens of other, even smaller ones. In terms of religion, 11.5 million of the Tsar’s subjects were described as Roman Catholics, 3.6 million as Lutherans, 5.2 million as Jews (followers of Judaism), and 13.9 million as “Mohammedans”. Russia turned out to be an empire of many nations, in any case many, many languages and religions. The famous triune formula of “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality”, which the Count Sergei Uvarov, Deputy Minister of National Education under Emperor Nicholas I, attempted to introduce to define the unity of the Empire over 60 years earlier, revealed its dramatic inadequacy to the reality of the late nineteenth century in a “scientific”, statistical, modern way. Let us add, however, that it was not revealed immediately. Before the collected data entered, along with its worrying significance, into public opinion, eight years would pass. Since this is how long it took to develop and publish the results of the census. In 1902, the first volumes publishing data from individual governorates were published, and it was not until 1905 that the work,

comprising 89 books in 119 volumes, was summed up with the presentation of results for the entire Empire.<sup>5</sup>

We will come back to these results later. Here, we only want to notice that in the case of Savitskii's native Chernigov Governorate, they have indeed confirmed the importance of Ukrainian-Russian ("Little Russian" – "Great Russian") synthesis. Without it, the governorate would have inevitably become an area of internal ethnic conflict. The young Petr Nikolaevich, who first attended the all-male classical gymnasium in nearby Gomel (1905–1906), and then the gymnasium in Chernigov itself (1906–1913), grew up with the awareness of the significance of this synthesis. As Sergei Glebov emphasizes, an important element at the beginnings of Savitskii's intellectual biography was his youthful fascination with the local history in which his family and its Cossack traditions were rooted. It was part of a very popular phenomenon at the time on a Russia-wide scale of *kraevedenie*, passionately conducted, mostly amateur studies on regional history, customs and folk art. It is worth noting that Chernigov was certainly one of the most important centers of Ukrainian cultural work in the Russian Empire of that time.<sup>6</sup>

What was this work building: the future of an independent Ukraine or a strong profile of "Little Russian" spiritual autonomy within some kind of a Great Russian imperial project? This question did not have its answer before the Great War. While we know for sure that it was already being asked and that it had to attract Petr Savitskii himself, who actively participated in this work. Even before graduating (with a gold medal) from the Chernigov gymnasium, in June 1913, he began publishing articles in the local municipal weekly *Chernigovskaia Zemskaiia Nedelia* on the subject of Ukrainian creative activity such as: stone architecture, embroidery traditions and their revival, and the style of Ukrainian icons. He displayed in them, with apparent pride, the original character of these works. He presented their flourishing in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century as a reflection of the then strength

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<sup>5</sup> See *Первая Всеобщая перепись населения Российской Империи 1897 г.*, ed. by Н.А. Тройницкий, vol. 2: *Общий свод по Империи результатов разработки данных Первой Всеобщей переписи населения, произведенной 28 января 1897 года*, Санкт-Петербург, 1905, tab. 13: "Распределение населения по родному языку"; the data is also available online: [http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus\\_lan\\_97.php](http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97.php) (accessed: 3 July 2017); cf. О. Ананьева, *Первая всеобщая перепись в России*, <http://informat444.narod.ru/museum/pres/pl-6-99.htm> (accessed: 3 July 2017).

<sup>6</sup> See: S. Glebov, "A Life with Imperial Dreams..." , pp. 300–302; M. Beisswenger, "Eurasianism Then and Now: A Russian Conservative Movement and Its Ukrainian Challenge", in: *Ukraine, The EU and Russia: History, Culture and International Relations*, ed. by S. Velychenko, New York, 2007, pp. 35–37.

of the Ukrainian spirit “the passion of Khmelnytsky, Paliy and Doroshenko”. And he deplored the extinguishment of this originality by Catherine II, who deliberately obliterated all distinctiveness in her empire. Up to the outbreak of the war, Savitskii managed to publish seven such articles.<sup>7</sup>

The second formative experience, after life in his hometown, the Ukrainian-“Little Russian” Chernigov, were studies in the capital of the Empire, and above all a meeting with Petr Struve (1870–1944). In September 1913, the graduate of the Chernigov gymnasium began a new stage of his education in the Economics Department of the Peter the Great Polytechnic Institute in Saint Petersburg. Struve had been employed there since 1907 as a lecturer.<sup>8</sup>

Savitskii participated in Struve’s economic seminar. Although, after the outbreak of the war, he volunteered twice to report to the Russian Army, he was not admitted for service due to his health (in winter 1914 to 1915, he even had to temporarily interrupt his studies due to severe pneumonia).

As a third year student in the Economics Department, he was admitted to the diplomatic service in Christiania (now Oslo), the capital of Norway, which had recently gained independence. He was recommended for this mission by Baron Boris Nolde, the department director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was also a colleague of Struve from the Petrograd Polytechnic Institute, and at the same time from the executive circles of the Kadet Party (Constitutional Democratic Party). Savitskii fulfilled his mission in Norway from July 1916 to March 1917 as a trade secretary in the Russian legation. There he prepared, under the guidance of a friendly deputy, Konstantin Gulkevich, the text of two Russian-Norwegian trade agreements, at the same time acting as a representative of the Petrograd telegraph agency in Christiania. In order to complete his studies, he returned to Petrograd in March 1917, where he witnessed the collapse of tsarism and then the convulsions of the Russian republic. He defended his candidate’s thesis, entitled *Norway’s Trade Policy During the War*, with the highest distinction (*summa cum laude*) on 4/17 October, exactly three weeks before the Bolshevik coup.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See M. Beisswenger, *Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii...*, p. 49 (entries 2–8 for 1913–1914). The quotation about the strength of the Ukrainian spirit comes from Savitskii’s article “Каменное строительство на Украине от времен Богдана Хмельницкого до времен Разумовского”, *Черниговская земская неделя*, 1913, nos. 9 (10/23 May) and 10 (17/ 30 May).

<sup>8</sup> See: R. Pipes, *Struve, Liberal on the Left, 1870–1905*, Cambridge, MA, 1970; id., *Struve. Liberal on the Right, 1905–1944*, Cambridge, MA, 1980 (the Polish edition of both volumes was published in 2016).

<sup>9</sup> See: Й.П. Нильсен, В.А. Карелин, “Петр Николаевич Савицкий: ‘евразиец’ в Норвегии”, *Наука из первых рук*, 60, 2014, no. 6, pp. 30–41; M. Beisswenger, *Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii...*, p. 24.

The period 1913–1917 must have been the formative years, of course, not only for the student from Chernigov, but for an entire generation of inhabitants of the Russian Empire. However, if we want to understand their meaning for Petr Savitskii himself, as well as for changes in visions, ways of understanding and justifying the empire that were happening at that time, we must stop for a moment. We must examine the concept, which was worked out before 1913 by Petr Struve on its deeper historical, political and ideological foundation. Struve was the author of the manifesto of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party of 1898, then co-founder of the liberal Constitutional Democratic Party in 1905 and four years later, the initiator of *Vekhi (Milestones)*, the most well-known collection of essays criticizing the leftist (*Narodnik* and nihilistic) traditions of the intelligentsia. He had already made his ideological breakthrough at the moment of the meeting with eighteen-year-old Savitskii. After the revolution of 1905–1907, he began to build his own version of modern nationalism for Russia as the hegemonic center of a liberal empire. He expressed it emphatically in two articles in 1908, which he presented in the pages of the prestigious monthly that he edited – *Russkaia mysl'*. They both bear telling titles: *Velikaia Rossia. Iz razmyshlenii o probleme russkogo mogushchestva* (“The Great Russia. Some Reflections on the Problem of Russian Might”) and *Otryvki o gosudarstve i natsii* (“Passages on State and Nation”).<sup>10</sup> The essence of the articles was an attempt to reconcile Russian nationalism, with the principles of a liberal, rule of law state and an imperial project in which Russia, after the tragic experiences of recent years (an internal revolution 1905–1907, and earlier, a humiliating defeat in the war with Japan), could rediscover its greatness alongside other empires.

How could the Empire, that had revealed its weakness, be saved? This is the question from which Struve's contemplations begin. They directly refer to the slogan of “Great Russia”, which was formulated in 1907 by Prime Minister Petr Stolypin, who set this ideal in opposition to “destructive” revolutionary aspirations. Struve, however, gives this slogan a slightly different meaning than the Russian Prime Minister. The Kadet publicist and politician, puts before the Russian Empire the task of not only restraining revolutionary forces within the state, but also the building of a “Greater Russia”. The model was to be the British Empire, as described by the English historian from Cambridge, Professor Robert Seeley in his extremely popular – also in Russia – synthesis, *The Expansion of England*, which from 1883 until the early twentieth century went through 17 editions, and in 1903 the Russian translation was published. Struve directly referred

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<sup>10</sup> Respectively: *Русская мысль*, 1908, no. 1 (Jan.), pp. 142–157 and no. 5 (May), pp. 187–193.

to this inspiration.<sup>11</sup> Just as the United Kingdom had developed from the English core out to the non-English periphery on the islands (Scotland, Wales, Ireland), and then through colonial expansion, it built something like an outer circle of the larger British community – from settlements of white colonists in South Africa, through Australia, all the way to Canada; Russia too could and should develop in this way. Not just pack up and simply defend the shrinking state of ownership – but develop, expand, integrate! The Russian center must take up anew its expansion program. In his article on “Great Russia”, Struve sets specific goals: economic control of the Black Sea basin and political and cultural domination in the Middle East as a result. It is possible to achieve these goals with the methods of a modern state, by economic means, in cooperation with the Western powers, with which Russia was already in alliance (with France – from 1894) or at least to have peacefully delineated interests (with the United Kingdom from 1907). An energetic, imperial foreign policy could be helpful in solving Russia’s internal problems: in shaping the ethos of patriotism within it, in overcoming devolutionary tendencies. Struve formulates a program of building a great nation with the aid of an assertive external policy of the Empire.

The might of the state is impossible to achieve without realizing the national idea. The national idea of modern Russia depends on reconciliation (*primirenie*) between the authorities and the people (*narod*) who are awakened to self-awareness and their own activity, which becomes a nation (*natsiia*). The nation and the state should organically fuse together.<sup>12</sup>

Here, in turn, Struve pointed out to contemporary Russia a historical example to imitate; that is Germany and the process of its “coming together” accelerated by Bismarck. The metaphor of the growing together of the state and the nation into one organism was developed in the next article, in which he even described this organism as a “mystical being”, which was to be confirmed by the readiness of members of this organism (the nation) to even risk their lives in the name of struggle for its well-being. He also mentioned the importance of a common language in the process of building this “organic unity”, as well as the

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<sup>11</sup> More broadly on this subject, see: A. Semyonov, “Mirrors of Imperial Imagination in Early Twentieth Century Russian Empire”, in: *Ofiary imperium. Imperia jako ofiary. 44 spoj-rzenia / Imperial Victims. Empires as Victims. 44 Views*, ed. by A. Nowak, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 139–152.

<sup>12</sup> П.В. Струве, “Великая Россия: из размышлений о проблеме русского могущества”, *Русская мысль*, 1908, no. 1 (Jan.), cit. after: *Нация и империя в русской мысли начала XX века*, ed. by С.М. Сергеев, Москва, 2004, p. 208.



need for a religious foundation on which stable patriotism should be based.<sup>13</sup> In a different, important text published two years later (in 1910) – “Two Nationalisms” – he clearly however stressed the difference of his vision from that of the representatives of “official” (i.e. state) nationalism. They are trying to act solely by force, which only mobilizes internal opponents of Russia: “nationalism based on violence (*nasilnicheskii natsionalizm*) is either a creator or a guardian of national consciousness and the ambitions of oppressed nations”. In contrast to this false, narrow, defensive, closed nationalism, Struve suggests liberal nationalism, or – it can also be called – liberal imperialism (as, among others, Dominic Lieven aptly describes it). He presents “his nationalism” as follows: “open to all, not afraid of rivalry, deliberately engaged in proselytism, because he believes that it will not dissolve in the sea of foreign elements, but transform them into itself, and at least with them will prove stronger and more stable.”<sup>14</sup>

A current model for imperial Russia was to be the Anglo-Saxon powers: Great Britain (“greater Britain”) and the United States, through economic development and the attractiveness of the civilizational offer, boldly fulfilling its mission of the “white man” – its “manifest destiny”. This is what Russia was to imitate in the twentieth century. Struve clearly indicated that it would not be possible to “transform” Poland and Finland into Russia and that in the face of these culturally well-formed and civilizationally mature Western peripheries, Russia must invent and skilfully apply a competent policy of autonomy (on what exactly this competent policy should depend – he did not explain). The Jews, finally given full rights within the liberal Empire, will become – Struve assumed – a factor conducive to the economic and cultural expansion of Russia, both within and without the land of the tsars. Towards other non-Russian ethnic minorities, the prospect opened up in this vision of liberal imperialism of a voluntary, evolutionary joining with the “greater Russia”, pulling them along with the potential of their development, rather than through force.<sup>15</sup>

However, the reality of the years 1905–1907 placed a question mark before such an optimistic assumption. The problem of the multi-ethnicity of the Empire, which could turn into a multinational mosaic of decentralizing political ambitions, was revealed by the most important institutional consequence of the revolution of these years: the State Duma called into being by the Tsar.

<sup>13</sup> П.В. Струве, “Отрывки о государстве и нации”, *Русская мысль*, 1908, no. 5 (May), pp. 187–193.

<sup>14</sup> Id., “Два национализма”, *Русская мысль*, 1910, no. 6 (June), cit. after: *Нация и империя в русской мысли...*, pp. 225–226; cf. D. Lieven, op. cit., p. 170–173.

<sup>15</sup> For a concise analysis of these views see: R. Pipes, *Struve. Liberal on the Right...*, pp. 90–92.

In the First Duma (April–July 1906), with a little over 500 places, 200 were occupied by non-Russians, including 62 “Little Russians”, 51 Poles, 13 Jews, 12 Belarusians, 10 Lithuanians, 7 Tatars and Georgians. In the Second Duma (February–June 1907) the proportions were similar (190 non-Russians). Phenomena such as the Polish Circle, the Muslim Faction, the Borderlands Circle, the interregional Union of Autonomists exposed a completely new challenge to Russian political life. The Russians saw that the Empire was certainly not only Russian. Non-Russian representations, on the other hand, finding themselves in the parliament and following the example of the best organized groups (like the Polish Circle) could gradually raise the bar of their political ambitions. Prime Minister Stolypin “reorganized” the electoral law so that only 72 non-Russians (including 28 Ukrainians, 22 Poles and 13 Germans) got into the Third Duma, as estimated by the researcher of the subject, Rustem Tsiunchuk, and just 55 non-Russians into the Fourth Duma (including 17 Poles and 14 Ukrainians).<sup>16</sup>

Regardless of the administrative methods by which the Stolypin government and his successors tried to chase the “genie” of the political aspirations of the non-Russian *ethne* of the Empire back into the bottle, with the inscription “Russia for Russians” – the problem remained. Its most disturbing point was of course the question of Ukraine. Without the successful and full assimilation of Ukrainians/Malorussians to the “greater Russia” project, there could be no discussion of further developing the project, or of maintaining hope for the liberal Empire, which the Russian Empire will remain, not only by name. This was precisely the reason why Struve vigorously opposed Ukrainian “separatism”. “Ukrainism” (like the idea of Belarusianness) may be content with a modest meaning, a local dialect, unthreatened in its daily use, or it may develop its own political ambitions, separatist towards the larger, “cultural”, “all-Russian” nation. In the second case, there will be a catastrophe. A catastrophe for the great, liberal **Russian** Empire. Struve did not want to allow this to happen, and therefore he openly attacked the manifestations of a strengthening, separate Ukrainian identity. They worried him almost the same as the ideologues of the extreme, nationalist Russian right, headed by Mikhail Menshikov.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See: P. Цюнчук, *Думская модель парламентаризма в Российской империи в этно-конфессиональном и региональном измерениях*, Казань, 2004; R. Ciunczuk, “Duma Państwa Imperium Rosyjskiego na progu pierwszej wojny światowej”, in: *Imperia, narody i społeczeństwa Europy Wschodniej i Środkowej na progu pierwszej wojny światowej*, ed. by A. Nowak, Warszawa, 2016, pp. 121–150.

<sup>17</sup> See: П. Струве, “Что же такое Россия (по поводу статьи В.Е. Жаботинского)”, *Русская мысль*, 1911, no. 1 (Jan.), pp. 177–178; id., “Общерусская культура и украинский партику-

This combination of nationalism and imperialism in the “greater Russia” project had its geopolitical consequences. It pushed inevitably in the direction of a confrontation with Austria-Hungary and their “big brother”, Wilhelm II. Fear of using the Ukrainian factor by Vienna in the fight against Saint Petersburg was combined with the slogan of Russia’s assertive foreign policy, whose field was to be – as we have already mentioned – the Balkans, the Black Sea Straits, and further, the Black Sea basin and influence in the Middle East. Here, Russia’s desire to confirm its imperial position had to clash with the interests of the Habsburg Empire and the aspirations of the German Empire to perpetuate its own penetration – through the Balkans and Turkey (via the Berlin-Baghdad railway) – in the same sector. At the same time, the fundamental hope in the vision of the editor of *Russkaia mysl’* was for the possibility of developing a new Russian imperialism in accordance with the model of the liberal Anglo-Saxon powers. This led him to believe that with them and with France, Russia will be able to recreate global harmony. This hope was confirmed not only by the logic of the alliance concluded with France and by the understanding with the United Kingdom, which together constituted the Entente since 1907, but also by the intensification of the British-German rivalry in the field of naval armaments. The new world order, based on the cooperation of liberal empires, was to arise thus after the “correction”, aided by the joint, wartime crackdown of Russia, Great Britain and France on the illiberal imperialism of the German Empire, the anachronistic Habsburgs’ monarchy and the decrepit Ottoman Empire.<sup>18</sup>

After the agreement of 1907, demarcating the influences of Russia and Great Britain in Persia and giving the British freedom in Afghanistan and Tibet, one could get the impression that the “Great Game”, which in the nineteenth century set Saint Petersburg and London in opposition in an inter-imperial rivalry in Asia, was losing its meaning. A close military alliance of Russia with France continued. Russian liberals, even those with a nationalistic-imperialist attitude like Struve, could assume that the possible entry into a war with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, would not only not put Russia in opposition to the West (Western Europe), but on the contrary will be a factor

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ляризм: ответ украинцу”, *Русская мысль*, 1912, no. 1 (Jan.), pp. 65–86; id., “Несколько слов по украинскому вопросу”, *Русская мысль*, 1913, no. 1 (Jan.), pp. 10–11; cf. A. Nowak, “Imperium wobec groźby rozpadu. Historyczna pamięć i wyobraźnia (przypadek Michała Mienszykowa)”, in: *Imperia, narody i społeczeństwa Europy Wschodniej...*, pp. 151–172; A. Semyonov, “Russian Liberalism and the Problem of Imperial Diversity”, in: *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, ed. by M.F. Fitzpatrick, London, 2012, pp. 67–89.

<sup>18</sup> See: R. Pipes, *Struve. Liberal on the Right...*, pp. 202–218; D. Lieven, op. cit., pp. 170–173.

for rapprochement, further supporting the Empire's occidentalization. The Russian influence and expansion was confirmed by actions such as on the Black Sea Straits, the Balkans, and solving the problem of Ukrainian "separatism" by occupying Eastern Galicia. So the goals of Saint Petersburg's expansive policy, indicated not only by Struve, but also by right-wing nationalist circles, as well as by representatives of government circles (with Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov) entailed a conflict with the "central" powers – but it could be accomplished on the basis of cooperation with Paris and London. The Russian project of a modern empire will only be completed by a new world order, based on other modern Western empires, such as the British (33 million km<sup>2</sup>) or French (10 million km<sup>2</sup>). There will be no "war of worlds", a renewal of the war between Russia and Europe, as several decades earlier, ideologues had imagined (after the experience of the Crimean War that suggested such associations) Russia as the anti-West, such as Nikolai Danilevskii or Konstantin Leontiev.<sup>19</sup>

Internally integrated and expanded externally after the fashion of "greater Britain", Russia was to be part of the victorious West, or rather, part of the inter-imperial globalization of the new, wonderful twentieth century? Not everyone believed it. In order to understand the ideological context of the development of the young Petr Savitskii's concept, and more broadly – Eurasianism – we have to take at least a short look at how the rich heritage of the vision of the conflict of Orthodox Russia with the Latin West/Europe met at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century with a new look at the relationship of space and politics, with then-emerging – geopolitics.

Let us start with the aforementioned Nikolai Danilevskii (1822–1885). His *magnum opus*, was published for the first time in book form in 1871 – *Rossia i Evropa: vzgliad na kulturnye i politicheskie otnoshenia slavianskogo mira k germano-romanskomu* ("Russia and Europe. A View on the Cultural and Political Relations of the Slavic with the German-Romance Worlds"). In Savitskii's birth year, 1895, the book was in its fifth edition. It had thus already gained some popularity, it had also become the subject of numerous

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<sup>19</sup> On the subject of expansion projects of the Russian Empire immediately before the First World War, it is worth reading, among others: S. McMeekin, *The Russian Origins...*, pp. 6–40; A. Bachturina, "Przyszłość Galicji w wizjach działaczy społecznych i w realnej polityce na początku XX wieku", in: *Imperia, narody i społeczeństwa Europy Wschodniej...*, pp. 297–318; A. Połunow, "W oczekiwaniu na nowy świat: powojenna przyszłość Europy Wschodniej, Bałkanów i Bliskiego Wschodu w koncepcjach środowisk Rosyjskiej Cerkwi Prawosławnej", in: *Imperia, narody i społeczeństwa Europy Wschodniej...*, pp. 279–296.

polemics (including with Vladimir Soloviov). Starting from the recognition of Europe's fundamental, ever-recurring hostility towards Russia as a historical fact, Danilevskii sought to present a "scientific" analysis of its causes. As part of it, he presented the concept of dividing the history of the world into "cultural-historical types", that is, separate civilizations. Distinguishing from antiquity ten such fully developed "types", he condemned the claims of the modern "Romano-Germanic type" (i.e. Western European) to the role of the only, exclusive civilization that wants to conquer and transform the rest of the world into its model. Russia, entering the historical arena as a powerful force of concentration of the new, Slavic, eleventh "cultural-historical type", upsets the West's claims. This is precisely the source of Western hostility towards Russia, the cause of the inevitable conflict between the "Romano-Germanic type" with the "Slavic type". In this depiction, Russia appears as if in the name of, or even at the head of, all other, non-Western civilizations that were persecuted, exploited or threatened presently by the cultural, economic and political domination of the "Romano-Germanic" model. The author of "Russia and Europe" at the same time introduced to his vision elements of the old Russian idea of placing "young" Russia/Slavdom in opposition to the "old", already „rotting", doomed to depart from the historical scene, Western civilization (the "Romano-Germanic type").<sup>20</sup>

The second "prophet", next to Danilevskii, of the anti-European orientation of Russia in the late nineteenth century was Konstantin Leontiev (1831–1891). He despised Slavdom and admired Asia, where he sought the salvation of his homeland from the disease of "Europeanism". A longtime Russian consul in Turkey, but also an editor-in-chief of *Varshavskii dnevnik*, saw in Russia a frontline state: a state of struggle against the liberal West, which will only be able to win this deadly match if it relies on Asia, on the strength of its conservative "inertia". The geopolitical symbol of this choice was to be, according to Leontiev, a reference to the civilization which Danilevskii forgot – to Byzantium. In his most important work, published in 1875, *Vizantizm i slavianstvo*

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<sup>20</sup> Н.Я. Данилевский, *Россия и Европа: Взгляд на культурные и политические отношения славянского мира к германо-романскому*, Санкт-Петербург, 1895; cf. with newer analyses, among others: Б.П. Балуев, *Споры о судьбах России*. Н.Я. Данилевский и его книга "Россия и Европа", Москва, 1999; С.И. Бажов, *Философия истории Н.Я. Данилевского*, Москва, 1997; Б.Н. Михеев, *Славянский Нострадамус*, vols. 1–2, Брест, 1993; See also a comprehensive review of many other studies on Danilevskii: И. Мартынюк, "За оградой славянофильства: Николай Данилевский – шпенглерянец..., картезианец...", *Ab Imperio*, 2001, no. 1–2, pp. 439–463.

(“Byzantism and Slavdom”), Leontiev stressed the need to amass both spiritual and direct military strength by Russia to face the expansion of the West (he uses exactly this term), and combine this into one “liberal-egalitarian” system.<sup>21</sup>

Let us add immediately that Leontiev was certainly not the first Russian thinker who turned his gaze to Asia in search of a source of support against the “civilizational” threat coming from Europe. Such a perspective, introduced by a romantic rebellion against Western models of the Enlightenment, was introduced to Russian thought in the 1830s by Sergei Uvarov, the creator of the new ideology of the Empire, contained in the memorable formula: “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality”.<sup>22</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century however such visions, revived on the wave of *fin-de-siècle* pessimism, seemed anachronistic. Also, the conviction that the identity and specific interests of Russia and Europe were in complete opposition to one another, became a thing of the past. The year 1895, the year of Savitskii’s birth, is after all the time to both confirm the strategic alliance of Saint Petersburg with republican Paris, as well as the vigorous expansion of Russia in the Far East. The construction of the Trans-Siberian railway and the taking advantage of the humiliating defeat of China in the clash with Japan in 1895, to attempt to subordinate the Chinese Empire to the economic and strategic interests of Saint Petersburg – all this by no means indicated any anti-Western turn of Russian policy. Russia pursued a colonial policy in this far-eastern section, analogous to that led by the United Kingdom and France, and a policy to which Germany and the United States were joining. Russia was one of the Western, “civilized” empires, sharing the rest of the world among themselves. And that was how the Russian political elite of that time perceived its place.

However, there was not much space on the globe left for sharing. The world was already divided. All that remained was the economic struggle between empires. This is how English economist, John A. Hobson, analyzed it in his pioneering work of 1902 on the economic and financial basis

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<sup>21</sup> See К. Леонтьев, *Восток, Россия и Славянство. Философская и политическая публицистика. Духовная проза (1872–1891)*, ed. by Г.Б. Кремнева, introd. by В.И. Косика, Москва, 1996; compare with an analysis of the views of Leontiev: В.И. Косик, *Константин Леонтьев: размышления на славянскую тему*, Москва, 1997; М. Bohun, *Kontrrewolucja i pesymizm. Filozofia społeczna Konstantina Leontjewa*, Kraków; 2000; М. Broda, *Historia a eschatologia. Studia nad myślą Konstantego Leontjewa i “zagadka Rosji”*, Łódź, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> More broadly on this subject – see: А. Зорин, *Кормя двуглавого орла... Литература и государственная идеология в России в последней трети XVIII – первой трети XIX века*, Москва, 2001, pp. 349–353.

of imperialism<sup>23</sup> that was also read in Russia (including by Vladimir Lenin). A year earlier, the Swedish geographer and political scientist, Rudolf Kjellén, took up the same problem of the clash of state politics in space from a different perspective. In the programmatic article “Politiken som vetenskap” (“Politics as Science”), he proposes the introduction of a new term: *geopolitics*. Hobson criticizes imperialism, Kjellén justifies it as a necessary struggle for territory by world powers. Both, however, agree on the inevitability of a great conflict resulting from inter-imperial rivalry. Let us add that in his subsequent book studies on empires (from 1905: *Stormakterna: konturer kring samtidens storpolitik* – “The Great Powers: Outlines of Contemporary Great Politics”, and from 1914, already in German: *Die Grossmächte der Gegenwart* – “The Great Powers of the Present”), the creator of the idea of geopolitics introduces the classifications that interest us in the context of Savitskii’s concept. The work differentiates between “young” empires such as Germany and Russia and “old”, i.e. “weakening” empires such as France and England. He also differentiates sea empires (with Great Britain, the United States and Japan) from continental empires (with Russia and Germany). He does not hide his sympathy for the German Empire and concern towards “rising” Russian imperialism. He expounds his views most broadly, along with the concept of geopolitics, during the First World War in a book published first in 1916, in Swedish (and in the following year in German): *Staten som livsform* (“The State as a Form of Life”).<sup>24</sup>

Earlier, however, on 25 January 1904, in the Royal Geographical Society in London, a separate, but no less important for the further interpretation of Savitskii’s and the Eurasianists’ thought, formula of the geopolitical clash of empires was presented by an English scholar, Halford Mackinder.<sup>25</sup> The first lecturer in geography at Oxford University and the co-founder of the London School of Economics began his lecture on the topic of the “Geographic Axis of History” by saying that the end has come for the age of Columbus, which lasted for over 400 years – geographical exploration of the world has come to a close. In combination with modern means of communication, acceleration and intensification of trade, this has led to the creation of a “closed political system”

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. D. Long, *Towards a New Liberal Internationalism: The International Theory of J.A. Hobson*, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 97–120.

<sup>24</sup> See P. Eberhardt, “Podstawy teoretyczne i idee geopolityki według Rudolfa Kjellena”, *Przegląd Geograficzny*, 84, 2012, no. 2, pp. 313–332.

<sup>25</sup> More broadly about his biography and ideas see: B. Blouet, *Halford Mackinder: A Biography*, Austin, 1987; G. Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder*, Oxford, 2009.

on a global scale. Isolationism is no longer possible. The United Kingdom must perceive the danger which geopolitical analysis allows it to recognize in this new situation. Asia and Europe no longer constitute separate continents, but one great supercontinent. Historically speaking, "European civilization is the result of the struggle against the Asian invasion". This fight is not over. Russia managed to take a strategic position in the center of the Eurasian supercontinent as a result of its centuries-long expansion. In 1904, for the first time, this center is termed by Mackinder the "heart-land" – the "heart of the land". The British Empire, however, brought key points under their control, stretched around a crescent at the point of contact between the great land and the sea. Russia can complete its continental expansion, ultimately pushing Great Britain out of these positions. It would be even more likely if Russia, as a continental power, makes an alliance with the other continental power – Germany. Then the global balance of power can forever be tilted in favor of the Russian Empire, in favor of the superpower (or alliance of powers) of the Land – at the expense of the Sea powers (with Great Britain at the forefront). As a tool for the expansion of the Land powers, the Trans-Siberian railway is the response to the Suez Canal (the way of expansion of the Sea power). The United Kingdom, in cooperation with the United States, Italy and France, must defend the position of the "crescent" – from Scandinavia, through the Mediterranean, Turkey, Egypt, Persia, India, all the way to Korea – from the pressure of Russia (or Russia and Germany combined). Maritime powers, above all Anglo-Saxon, against Eurasian Russia: this is the essence of the geopolitical vision that Mackinder made available not only to the listeners of his lecture, but also to readers of the prestigious *The Geographical Journal*.<sup>26</sup>

The young Savitskii almost certainly could, before creating his first Eurasian manifesto, acquaint himself with Kjellén's works. He was fluent in German, and – as we have already mentioned – for almost nine months, in 1916–1917, he worked in the Russian legation in Christiania (Oslo). He did not have to know Mackinder's text, although as a student of geographical, economic and political subjects, he could at least have heard about it, as well as about Hobson's well-known book. However, if we recall here, in a nutshell, these Russian voices from the beginning of the twentieth century, announcing new "scientific"

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<sup>26</sup> H.J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History", *The Geographical Journal*, 23, 1904, no. 4, pp. 421–437. Cf. this with two interesting analyses of the context of this publication: G. Kearns, "The Political Pivot of Geography", *The Geographical Journal*, 170, 2004, no. 4, pp. 337–346; P. Venier, "The Geographical Pivot of History and Early Twentieth-Century Geopolitical Culture", *The Geographical Journal*, 170, 2004, no. 4, pp. 330–336.



formulas for understanding the approaching great clash, it is not because we want to find their direct (not ruled out, but difficult to prove) influences on the thought of the co-creator of Eurasianism. We are rather trying to describe a common, so to speak, space of geopolitical imagination. This was revealed gradually in the first years of the twentieth century, in various parts of the globe, undermining hopes for the possibility of maintaining an inter-imperial balance, and above all, a secure place for Russia in this balance. There will thus be no harmony, instead there will be war. And Russia will not appear in it as one of the Western powers, modernity – but it will have to fight for survival as a great empire, in a hard confrontation with the Western powers. Such a lesson of political reality collided with those hopes we described a bit earlier on the example of Struve’s vision of liberal imperialism.

This lesson gained strong confirmation in the reality of 1904–1905, a strengthening much more convincing for many than reading books or articles of the classics of Russian anti-Western thought or contemporary European theoreticians of politics. Russia was beaten in the war with Japan. It did not gain any support or sympathy from other Western powers. Its status as a modern empire, belonging to a new, so to speak, concert of the “civilized” powers of the twentieth century, was painfully challenged. Does Russia still belong to Europe? Is it a peripheral power, still rejected – as Danilevskii or Leontiev once formulated, and now confirmed by Kjellén or Mackinder – by the West?

Savitskii and his peers could find these questions in the new texts of Russian authors. The works of Vladimir Lamanskii (1833–1914) and Dmitri Mendeleev (1834–1907) certainly belonged to those that could play a particularly important role in further forming his concept. The first, a historian, philologist, Slavist, professor at the University of Saint Petersburg and a member of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences, for years developed the concept justifying the antagonism of Russia and Europe. In 1892, he published a new take on the concept: “The Three Worlds of the Asian-European Land”. To the scheme “Russia (Slavdom)” – “Europe”, he added the third element: Asia. Asia is for him “a world of decrepit old age”, which had already played its historical role in the past. Europe, an aggressive “Romano-Germanic world”, occupies the western part of the great land. Russia, the Slavic countries and some non-Slavic nations, form the “middle world” between these two poles, which is neither real Asia nor real Europe.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See В.И. Ламанский, *Геополитика панславизма*, ed. by Ю.В. Климаков, О.А. Платонов, Москва, 2010, pp. 183–322 (here the reprint of a 1892 treaty: *Три мира Азийско-Европейского материка*).

The conviction in Asia's "decrepit old age" had to be put to rest after the defeat of Russia in the war with Japan. This painful experience put a new light on the position of the Russian Empire between Asia and Europe. Quite unexpectedly, a great Russian chemist, Dmitri Mendeleev, took up this issue in an analysis published in 1906 – *K poznaniu Rossii* ("To Knowing Russia"). The geopolitical sense of Russia's situation is already expressed at the outset of his work by means of a vivid metaphor: "Our extraordinary country lies between the hammer of Europe and the anvil of Asia." Like Lamanskii, Mendeleev considers the Russian Empire to be "the world in between". However, unlike Lamanskii, not sharing his pan-Slavist ambitions or anti-Western attitude, he believed that Russia should not engage in any "war of worlds" but rather deal with the systematic strengthening of its own internal potential. If Russia is to develop properly, it must gradually move its population center, and with it, economic development, towards the east, towards its geographical center, towards Asia. Russia should move away to some extent from the "European hammer". She should gain strength (Mendeleev predicted that following his prescription, the Russian Empire would reach a population of about 850 million in 2050...) and become a powerful intermediary between Asia and Europe.<sup>28</sup>

A similar line of thought was developed by Prince Grigori Nikolaevich Trubetskoi (1873–1930), the closest associate and adviser to Petr Struve in the field of international relations. A professional diplomat, he served in the legation in Constantinople until 1905, when he decided, together with his brother Evgeni, to publish *Moskovskii ezhenedel'nik*, one of the most important political platforms of Russian liberalism. In 1912, he returned to diplomacy. Somewhat earlier, he summarized his opinions about the possibility of rebuilding the position of the Empire in the collection of articles *Velikaia Rossiia* ("Great Russia", 1910). He stated therein that since the late nineteenth century, that is, from Russia's open involvement in Far East politics, it is difficult to portray the Empire as solely a European power. Russia is a Eurasian power. After the experience of the war with Japan, it is necessary to deal with strengthening Russian positions in Asia, expanding influence in China, Korea, Persia and Turkey. On the other hand, a defensive stance should be taken on the European front.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See: Д.И. Менделеев, *К познанию России*, Санкт-Петербург, 1906; a new edition: id., *К познанию России*, Москва, 2002; И.В. Алексеева, Е.И. Зеленев, В.И. Якунин, *Геополитика в России. Между Востоком и Западом. Конец XVIII – начало XX в.*, Санкт-Петербург, 2001, pp. 182–187.

<sup>29</sup> See Г.Н. Трубецкой, "Россия как великая держава", in: *Великая Россия: сборник статей по военным и общественным вопросам*, ed. by В.П. Рябушинский, vol. 1, Москва,

However, the turn towards Asia was also at the same time presented by Russian publicists as a prerequisite for the great, final game with the empire-Leviathan – Great Britain, and more broadly – with both Anglo-Saxon powers. This, and not war with Germany or Austria-Hungary for dominance over the Slavic world, was to be the main front in the eternal struggle between Russia and the West at the opening of the twentieth century. The tradition of strategic considerations related to the nineteenth-century “Great Game” between Russia and England in Asia was undertaken by Andrei Snesev (1865–1937). In two publications (from 1903 and 1906): *Severo-indiiskii teatr (voenno-geograficheskoe opisanie)* (“North Indian Theater [of War]”) and *India, kak glavnii faktor v Srednie-Aziatskom voprose* (“India as the Main Factor in the Central Asian Issue”), Snesev presented a significant new understanding of the geopolitical dilemma of Russia. Shortly after the defeat in the war with Japan, he concluded that the path of further expansion of Russia in the Far East was closed; in the West, Russia is blocked by the Germanic central states (Germany and Austria-Hungary), and finally, the hostility of all European powers against Russia’s further progress in this direction. To develop further, Russia must go out into the open, warm sea. The nearest, to which Russia should systematically head, is the Indian Ocean. Wanting to gain its rightful place among the powers of the twentieth century, Russia must move its geopolitical center of gravity to the south: towards India. And wage a deadly battle over this with the “British lion”.<sup>30</sup>

In real politics, shortly after the works of Snesev were published, the Russian Empire made the exact opposite choice: in 1907 it settled an agreement with Great Britain in Asia to maintain peace and balance after the shocks of the internal revolution and maintain alliances that countered the possible threat from Germany. It was a choice in accordance with the tendencies expressed by Mendeleev, Grigori Trubetskoi or Struve. It found, however, its extremely

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1910, pp. 21–139; cf. G.N. Trubetskoi, *Notes of a Plenipotentiary: Russian Diplomacy and War in the Balkans, 1914–1917*, DeKalb, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> See: А.Е. Снесарев, *Северо-Индийский театр*, Ташкент, 1903; id., *Индия как главный фактор в среднеазиатском вопросе*, Санкт-Петербург, 1906. Let us add that Colonel Snesev bit his tongue and continued his military duties up to the position of division commander in the First World War. He finally found a better understanding for his anti-British ideas in the Red Army, which he joined in 1918, and six years later he published a handbook on military geography for its needs. See Е.Ф. Морозов, “А.Е. Снесарев – величайший русский геополитик”, *Русский Геополитический Сборник*, 1995, no. 1, pp. 29–46; cf. И.В. Алексеева, Е.И. Зеленев, В.И. Якунин, op. cit., pp. 168–172.

eloquent critic, who just before the outbreak of the First World War, presented a completely new vision of the fundamental collision of Russia with the West. In it, the West was not a “Romano-Germanic” world, but a focused force of Anglo-Saxon powers, malevolent towards Russia, that was Great Britain and the United States. The author of this concept was a modest graduate from the Vilnius Junker Infantry School, until 1899 a mere lieutenant, Alexei Efimovich Edrikhin (1867–1933). However, he went down in the history of geopolitical reflection under the name Vandam, which he took under the influence of his experiences in South Africa, where he went as a war correspondent – and also a volunteer – of the First Boer War (he took his pen-name in honor of one of the commanders of the Boer guerrillas against the English, Gerard Van Dam). He presented his concepts as the author of two books: *Nashe polozhenie* (“Our Situation”, 1912) and *Velichaishee iz iskusstv. Obzor sovremennogo polozhenia v svete vysshei strategii* (“The Greatest Art: Overview of the Contemporary International Situation in the Light of a Higher Strategy”, 1913). In the first one, he presents the history of Russia’s expansion in the Far East in the nineteenth century, beginning this review regretting the cessation of Russian colonial progress in America, first in 1825, when it was limited to Alaska, and then wrecked by the sale of Alaska itself to the United States in 1867. Russia’s active Chinese policy remained and was confirmed by the strengthening of its position on the Amur River. Vandam states emphatically: Russia “took the place of Tartary” and with it “inherited its attitude to the southern half of Asia, and hence above all to China and India”. The main opponents in this Eurasian mission of Russia were the two Anglo-Saxon powers.<sup>31</sup>

Vandam turns out to be one of the first in-depth Russian readers of Commander Alfred Thayer Mahan, the main strategist of American oceanic expansion and whose book *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* (published in 1890) became a worldwide hit and was recommended as a must-read in both the British and German (by Admiral Tirpitz) fleets. Mahan referred to the need for the United States to pursue a strategy of controlling permanent bases for its navy, in order to secure routes through global oceans for American trade. In the work *The Interest of America in Sea Power...* (1897), he added pointers on to how to achieve permanent domination on the seas: strategic cooperation with Great Britain, stopping the sea ambitions of Germany and Japan and

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<sup>31</sup> А.Е. Вандам, “Наше положение”, in: id., *Геополитика и геостратегия*, ed. and introd. by И. Образцов, Москва, 2002, p. 57 [the initials are misspelt in this edition as: E.A.]. It was first published in Saint Petersburg in 1912. The biography of Edrikhin-Vandam, written by Igor Obraztsov, can be found in the 2002 edition – pp. 7–26.

blocking the development of land powers in Asia. In this light, Vandam saw the outline of the diabolical (masonic) plan of the Anglo-Saxons, to destroy the Russian fleet, push back the Romanov Empire from the Pacific Ocean, maintain control over key positions in Central Asia, and finally repel Russia from the Caspian and Black Seas by renewing Turkey's strength as an anti-Moscow power. Now, according to Vandam, the Anglo-Saxons want to provoke a war of Russia with Germany and Austria-Hungary over basically tertiary influences in the Balkans. Vandam advises: "let's not get caught up in this intrigue; an alliance of land empires is needed against it, and thus Russia and Germany. It is the only way to now stop this 'subtle despotism' of the Anglo-Saxons."<sup>32</sup>

Vandam devoted his second work to analyzing the current geopolitical situation (1913) in the perspective of the vision, laid out earlier, of a major battle between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon powers. Here this clash rises to the rank of a final confrontation, as the final war between the "Slavic" and the "Romano-Germanic" worlds of Danilevskii. Standing on opposing sides are 160 million Russians ("Russians", to whom Vandam optimistically counts all residents of the Romanov Empire in 1913) and 160 million Anglo-Saxons. These are the forces between which the great battle of the twentieth century will take place. Germany, with its 65 million people, even when tied with Austria-Hungary and an (uncertain) alliance with Italy, squeezed between these two forces, must choose between the old *Drang nach Osten* strategy and the new one, proclaimed by Wilhelm II: *unsere Zukunft liegt an der See* ("our future lies on the sea"). He argues that England will push Berlin to war in line with this first strategy, which in fact guarantees the defeat of the German Empire. France will take Alsace and Lorraine, Germany will be broken up, the Anglo-Saxons will take away all their colonies. On the battlefield, only Russia will remain – as the last opponent, the last obstacle on the road to Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the world.<sup>33</sup>

Lamanskii's concept is considered by researchers of the idea of Eurasianism as one of the most important inspirations for Savitskii's geographical systematics. The traces of other inspirations can possibly be gleaned from the texts of Mendeleev, Grigori Trubetskoi or the geopolitical ideas of Snesev or Vandam discussed above. We have quoted their important fragments because they complement the panorama of the dilemmas of Russian imperial thought

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 88–154.

<sup>33</sup> See A.E. Вандам, "Величайшее из искусств. Обзор современного положения в свете высшей стратегии", in: id., *Геополитика и геостратегия...*, pp. 157–185. The original edition was published in Saint Petersburg in 1913.

on the threshold of the Great War. The premise of reflection on the choice of the way of the Russian Empire at the crossroads of 1914, formed a concept of Russia's place among other empires that had been maturing in the preceding twenty years (a turbulent twenty years of the reign of Nicholas II). It describes a world that suddenly, along with modernity (in its economic, communication and ideological dimensions) became too tight, cramped. How to survive in this world, how to preserve, defend, and maybe expand the place for the Russian Empire? Between Germany/the German Empire, the British Empire, Japan (a new Asian rival) and China, it seemed, at least between 1895 and 1904, a promising area of Russian expansion? The old question about the place of Russia in relation to "Europe" or the "West" (together with the United States) begins to be perceived in a new context in which "Asia" once again reveals its meaning. It is no longer just an area to be conquered, but is again discovered as a source of both "yellow danger" and at the same time of eternal spiritual inspirations which relativize the universality of Western, European models.<sup>34</sup> Is Russia the east of the West? And will it connect more deeply with the West, with whose powers (France and, in a certain sense also with Great Britain) it was already bound by the alliance and joint responsibility for modernization, for improving the world in the twentieth century? Or will it become the "anti-West" again? And in what sense? Like Danilevskii envisioned it in the fixed, pan-Slavic scheme from the nineteenth century? Or in the great Slavic-German clash, about which, on the other hand, many publicists and German politicians wrote and also spoke about, with Emperor Wilhelm II himself and his chief of staff, Helmut von Moltke the Younger at the forefront?<sup>35</sup> Alternatively in some new, felt out configuration, whose visions were more often heard in culture than in political reflection? Or in the rebellion of youth, savagery, "Scythianism" – against the "old world", as always, located in the West?

In Russian thought on the eve of the war, exuberant hopes, almost messianic expectations were met with even greater fears, with fear of a terrible catastrophe. From the perspective of our knowledge of what happened later, as a result of Russia joining the war, we are inclined to see the correctness of those

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<sup>34</sup> On transformations in the perception of Asia, or more precisely, those defining the understanding of Far Eastern empires in Russian thought and culture at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see: S. Soojung Lim, *China and Japan in the Russian Imagination, 1685–1922. To the Ends of the Orient*, London and New York, 2013, pp. 109–131 ("From Panmongolism to proto-Eurasianism") and pp. 131–169 ("Revolution and the yellow peril").

<sup>35</sup> See J.C.G. Röhl, *Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss of War and Exile, 1900–41*, vol. 3, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 921–922, 933, 950–951.

who earlier pointed to the threat of a catastrophe. This is how, for example, the British sympathizer of the tsarist empire, Dominic Lieven, sees it in his analysis of the genesis of the First World War. Responsibility for the tragedy is placed on the rapid pressure of modernity/modernization and associated ethnic nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century (for the Russian Empire, the Ukrainian problem is clearly indicated as a deadly challenge).<sup>36</sup>

Another researcher, American historian Joshua Sanborn, considers the same problem from a totally different point of view. In his monograph devoted to the destruction of the Russian Empire, he sees in the matter he presents the first manifestation of the twentieth century process of decolonization: in this case the decolonization of Central and Eastern Europe. War was a conflict not only between empires about the scope of their control over the disputed zones of influence, but also the conflict over the scope of imperial control in general, within individual countries. Sanborn distinguishes four phases in this conflict. The first one is described as a “challenge to the empire”, that is characterized by the revelation of anti-imperial national movements in the colonies or on the periphery of the power structure. The second phase is the break-up of the state, the break-up of personalized power networks and the system of legitimate state violence. The third phase is the phase of “social disaster”, leading to the disappearance of old social ties, practices and institutions. The fourth phase is the post-colonial period of building a new state. The first of these phases is noticed by the American historian at the outbreak of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), exacerbating the inter-imperial conflict between Russia and Austria-Hungary together with Germany. The First World War, which he calls the Third Balkan War, raised the question of whether anti-imperial decentralizing (decolonization) movements on the periphery of the state will prove stronger, or whether there will be success in realizing the ambitions of external expansion, thus reviving the imperial center. From the defeat of the Russian army at Gorlice at the beginning of May 1915, this issue had already been resolved – the second phase of the “apocalypse of the empire” had begun. The defeat moved from the front to the rear, deeper and deeper, opening over the course of more than a year the way to the third phase, to the atrophy of old social ties and the revealing of the whole force of anti-colonial devolutionary movements. However, Sanborn does not think that this scenario is inevitable. The entry of Russia into the war was decisive. According to the American researcher, after the crisis of 1904–1907,

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<sup>36</sup> D. Lieven, *op. cit.*, p. 368, cf. also pp. 311–312.

Russia – especially due to the reforms of Prime Minister Petr Stolypin – stabilized its situation internally enough that the collapse of its imperial structure was by no means a foregone conclusion.<sup>37</sup>

And this was also the point of view of the majority of politically conscious Russian elites in 1914. This mood certainly dominated the circle of the liberal right wing, in which the young Savitskii orbited. As soon as 4 August, when Great Britain entered with its empire to war against the central states, his mentor, Struve, no longer had any doubts: a simple account of economic strength indicates that Russia will be on the side of the victors in this war. Struve's enthusiastic publications from the summer of 1914 shine through with the belief in the possibility of the war "forging" a new Russian patriotism and strong conviction of the possibility of perpetuating the above, supra-ethnic, imperial version of it, encompassing not only Russians and their Ukrainian- and Belarusian-speaking "younger brothers", but also the vast majority of the multi-tribed subjects of the Tsar. A similar hope, for overcoming by the war with the common enemy – Germans – the age-old dispute of the Russian imperial project with the Polish national movement, is also presented in the text of the "Appeal" of the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich to Poles from 14 August (O.S. 1 August), which was actually written by Grigori Trubetskoi.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. War and revolution – the crisis of the imperial project and its ideological reconstruction (1914–1921)

In such an atmosphere and such an outlined intellectual context, the debut of Petr Savitskii as a political thinker should be considered. The place of this debut was *Russkaia mysl'*, edited by Struve, a prestigious *tolstii zhurnal* (a literary journal).<sup>39</sup> Here, at the beginning of 1915, in two issues, an extensive text of

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<sup>37</sup> See J.A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire*, Oxford, 2014, pp. 3–7, 63–65, 249–250.

<sup>38</sup> See: R. Pipes, *Struve. Liberal on the Right...*, pp. 202–209; G.N. Trubetskoi, *Notes of a Plenipotentiary...*, pp. 13–15; R.A. Poole, "Religion, War, and Revolution. E.N. Trubetskoi's Liberal Construction of Russian National Identity, 1912–20", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 7, 2006, no. 2 (Spring), pp. 195–240 (esp. pp. 204–215).

<sup>39</sup> More broadly on the subject of *Russkaia mysl'* see, among others, J. Delaney Grossman, "Rise and decline of the 'literary' journal: 1880–1917", in: *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia*, ed. by D.A. Martinsen, Cambridge and New York, 1997, pp. 171–196; A.A. Гапоненков, *Журнал "Русская мысль" 1907–1918 гг. Редакционная программа, литературно-философский контекст*, Саратов, 2004.



the 19-year-old author appeared. Petr Savitskii presented his thoughts to the elite of the intellectual capital and all of Russia under a very combative title: *Bor'ba za imperiiu* ("The Fight for the Empire").<sup>40</sup> They were formulated, as you can imagine, at the Struve economic and political seminar in 1914.

Astounding in their maturity, Savitskii's reflections take up the main problem that his master himself had been toiling over for years: how to, in the Russian practice of the twentieth century, reconcile the national principle with the empire? The German example, well known to the author from the literature, serves as a frame of reference to his own project. The Germans first united their nation by creating an empire in 1870–71 which took on the burden of expanding economic and cultural influences beyond its national territory. Savitskii presents his generalization of this process, his definition of imperialist politics, and followed by it – empire.

The politics of any nation, expanding its national economy, national culture, or the borders of its national state beyond the borders of its nationality, its national territory, can be called imperialist. Such a policy aims to bring other nations and countries into the circle of influence of the "imperializing" nation or country, thus forcing them to revolve around the "imperializing" center, like planets move around the sun, or even to fuse the whole system into one political, cultural and economic whole, and – in this way – replacing the national economy, culture and state of the dominating nation, with an economy, culture and supranational state, as it happened and can happen in imperialist formations of a certain type.<sup>41</sup>

Empire is simply a successful imperialist policy.

Savitskii created his vision of the empire in response to the contemporary, well-known to him and experienced from the Chernigov childhood, challenge of ethno-nationalism. He already knows the alternative to modern imperial projects. It is, of course, the nation state. Struve's student describes the differences that separate such a structure from the empire. The nation-state seeks to encompass people of one nationality fully. The national culture developed in it should be largely independent of the culture of other nations, and at the same time it should not control the cultures of other nations. "There are no pupils and it is not trying to attract the forces of foreign nations to work on his field."<sup>42</sup> The empire, on the other hand, as a result of imperialist policy,

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<sup>40</sup> П.Н. Савицкий, "Борьба за империю. Империализм в политике и экономике", *Русская мысль*, 1915, no. 1 (Jan.), pp. 51–57 and no. 2 (Feb.) 1915, pp. 56–77 (2nd pt.). Printed in its entirety in: *Нация и империя в русской мысли...*, pp. 261–309.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262; cf. p. 266.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

using and subordinating the forces of other nations, never arises at their request. Savitskii, conscious heir to the Cossack-Russian tradition, does not aim to idealize the construction of the empire. It is always formed, he states, on the initiative and through the action of one, "imperializing" nation, which by coercion or systems draws others into the sphere of its influence.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, in his concept, the author of "The Fight for the Empire" emphasizes that there is not always a clear, sharp boundary between national and imperial principles. The nation is often the result of the merging of many ethnicities (and therefore the imperial principle). There is no one perfectly "pure" nation, nor empire in real history. We are not dealing with static models, but with a dynamic process. For example, the Swedish national state maintains its imperial task, for example towards the Finns. Similarly, the Hungarians combine elements of national and imperial policy – for example, towards the Slovaks or Transcarpathian Ruthenians. Of course, the Empire is not a conglomeration of nations. For them to be united in an imperial, cultural-economic-political structure, it is necessary to stop the ambitions of individual nations to become independent of the "nation-center". This is supposed to be prevented by a conscious "imperializing" policy. It cannot be based only on force, on violence. "The main condition for the cultural and economic connection [of different nations with the imperial national center] is the historical rationality of this process, its importance for world progress."<sup>44</sup> This argument, well known from other variants of British, American or French, nineteenth-century liberal imperialism, also expressed the hopes and ambitions of Savitskii's master, Struve, that modernizing Russia could effectively imitate Western empires in this art of rationalizing their imperial policy. Imperialism must offer something positive to the nations pulled into its orbit, which will inevitably overwhelm the unhappiness that accompanies subordination. Sometimes this positive "added value" may be associated with a response to a common threat. In this context, for the first time from the future "father of Eurasianism", appears the recognition of the Mongol invasion of Rus' – because it helped to unite North Russia (around Moscow) – and thus gave rise to the effective working of the "imperializing" nucleus of Russia in subsequent centuries.<sup>45</sup>

Savitskii further distinguishes two basic types of empire building processes. An example of the first is ancient Rome, in which the economic and cultural combination followed the political (conquest). The second is represented by

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<sup>43</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 265–266.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 267–268.

<sup>45</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 268.

the United Kingdom, whose empire was built by earlier commercial influences and, more broadly, economic exploitation. The Roman Empire was based on the establishment of specific political relations. The British Empire was based on the establishment of specific economic relations between the metropolis and the colonies. Savitskii calls these two types “continental-political” and “colonial-economic” respectively. The former includes, beside Rome, among others, the empire of Alexander the Great and Russia. To the second, next to England, he also includes the Dutch or French empires. Contemporary imperialist processes have not come to an end, asserts the young publicist of *Russkaia mysl'* – as if in a hidden polemic with the opinion of Mackinder about the end of the Columbus era, about the closure of the dividing of the world. Taking up the same threads, which we found in the books of Vandam-Edrikhin from 1912–1913, Savitskii poses the question: “to which of the cultural nations will fall the great task to imperialize the backward nations and lands?” And he replies that “this role is devoted in the greatest degree to England and Russia.”<sup>46</sup> However, he does not yet proclaim, in contrast to Vandam, the inevitability of the conflict between them. He looks for balance between them.

In the latter parts of his huge article, the young author tries to present what he calls the “clash of imperialist ideas in 1914”.<sup>47</sup> Since the actual opponent of Russia turned out to be Germany, he devotes the most attention to their imperial idea. The comparison of the maritime *Weltpolitik* of the German Empire, based on a careful analysis of several German studies, allows Savitskii to see its similarities, in this latest phase, with the British policy of “colonial-economic” expansion. Together, therefore, in opposition to both of them, he can present, what is most interesting from our point of view, his own vision of Russian imperialism. It begins with a very interesting remark of a geopolitical nature: although Germany and Russia are currently at war, basically “the idea of imperialist Germany is much easier to reconcile with the idea of imperialist Russia than with the idea of imperialist England.” And this is due to the fact that Russian imperialism remains consistently within the framework of the “continental-political” type, which can be more quickly separated in its influence from the “colonial-economic” type of empire, than can be done between two imperialisms struggling together for dominance of the seas, as now Germany with England. Russia therefore still retains, even after the war, the freedom of geopolitical choice: it can agree on a further global partnership

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

with England or reconcile with Germany – this is the logical conclusion of this remark.<sup>48</sup>

Moving further into the history of the Russian imperial idea and practice, Savitskii makes a distinction between the various stages of creating empires in general. The first is to create a great nation – the center of the imperial project. In Russia, the same stage means achieving the unity of the eastern Slavs, guaranteeing the assimilation of the Great Russians, Ukrainians and Belarussians into a single, all-Russian model. Savitskii, obviously using his Chernigov experiences and family traditions, pointed out in Ukrainians (he uses these terms: “Ukraine” and “Ukrainians”, not “Malorossiiia” and “Malorussians”, and opposes them to – before the seventeenth century – not Russia, but “Muscovy”) a component of the ethnic core of the Empire, equal to the Great Russians. In an original, pioneering way, in comparison to later historiography, he stressed the paramount contribution of the Ukrainian ethnic and cultural element in the construction of the Empire in the second half of the seventeenth century and in the times of Peter the Great. “Muscovy” could become Russia only through the assimilation of the living, creative spirit of culture, taken over at that time from the then better-educated Ukraine. Recognizing the fact of Ukraine’s centuries-long separation from Moscow and the former’s relationship with Lithuania and then with Poland, Savitskii also justified the natural character of the Ukrainian-Moscow union in the seventeenth century: the community of Byzantine civilization and tribal affinities decided about it. Ukraine could unite with Poland only on an imperial basis, but with Russia it united in the process of creating an enlarged national formula. In addition, Savitskii points out that Poland lacked a ruling elite which would recognize the rules of imperialist politics and was able to create a country with a supra-Polish (in the ethnic sense) identity. Peter, meanwhile, “inundated Muscovy with Ukrainian clergy” and created in the new, Saint Petersburg period, a successful Ukrainian-Muscovite synthesis: imperial Russia.<sup>49</sup>

Characteristically, Savitskii does not develop the thread of possible opposition to the current project of Ukrainian independence, perceived by so many contemporary Russian publicists and politicians. It was as if the heir of Cossack-Russian traditions from Chernigov recognized that from the moment of the merger of the Ukrainian element into the great Russian “imperializing” of other nations, from the time of joining in the seventeenth and eighteenth

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<sup>48</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 299, 309.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 301–302.

centuries, it is necessary to consistently stick to the forces associated with this vector. This is the only way to participate in the great inter-imperial game. The nation-state (in this case: Ukrainian), small, without broader ambitions, apparently seemed unattractive to him.

Thus, he discusses the second stage in creating an empire: it is the process of a “great nation” of deliberately drawing successive nations and countries into the circle of its influence, until they are completely united in one economic, cultural and finally, political structure. This stage began in the history of Russia in the times of Catherine II, together with the conquest of Crimea, and the joining of Georgia; then Russia crosses the line between the achievement of national unity and the construction of an empire that goes beyond the borders of the nation, which the Germans will only cross over a hundred years later. However, the later imperial process in Russia differs significantly, in Savitskii’s analysis, from the “colonial-economic” type, for which the model is the British Empire (and which the German Empire is just starting to imitate and trying to compete with). Developing his systematization of empires, the young publicist emphasized that in the “continental-political” type, which Russia perfectly represents, there are no radical economic inequalities characteristic of the “colonial” type, indicating the factual exploitation of the periphery (colonies) by the center (metropolis). There are also no, “colonial” type, political inequalities where the peripheries do not have their representation in the center: for example, do Indians have their party in the House of Commons or the House of Lords on the Thames? Meanwhile, economic equality is preserved in Russia. Can one speak of the economic handicapping of the Kingdom of Poland in the Russian imperial system? Rather, it, its industry, is the economic “imperial nucleus” of the Russian Empire, like the Moscow region... All major nations also have their political representation in the Duma.<sup>50</sup> Only the “continental-political” (Russian) type of empire guarantees a combination of power and justice – argues Savitskii at the turn of 1914 and 1915. And, anticipating the later ideas of Eurasianism, he already indicated in the summary of his first great study, the ultimate goal and direction of Great Russia’s extension of these principles: “creating an organic imperial unity of all nations and lands of ancient culture – from Constantinople through Delhi to Beijing.”<sup>51</sup> However, he immediately cooled down the emotions, reminding (following Struve) that Russia had not yet developed many elements of culture essential for achieving the global success

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 306–307.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 309.

of its empire: commencing from the political culture (state consciousness of the citizens of the empire). For this reason, Russia must limit itself only to mastering the Black Sea straits, guaranteeing their economic development, and systematically pulling into its orbit of influence and imperial dominance, the Caucasus nations, with all Armenians, with the Persians, further – Central Asia, and finally – the Mongols.<sup>52</sup>

The full scale of Russia's imperial ambitions, as Savitskii laid out for the distant future – “from Constantinople through Delhi to Beijing” – in fact corresponded to Mackinder's worst fears about the possibility of control being taken over Eurasia by one Russian power. This was already a not so veiled announcement of a further, more important than the current war, great confrontation: the land-based, Russian, Eurasian Behemoth with the British (Anglo-Saxon, English-French, Western – depending on the version) Leviathan. In other words, a forecast repeating the geopolitical logic of Vandam's considerations.

However, in the first text/manifesto of the views of the future co-creator of Eurasianism, there was no vision of the clash of civilizations. His study of early 1915 still fits within the bounds of hopes expressed by the liberal project of Russian imperialism – the one to whom Struve was patron. As noted by Sergei Mikhailovich Sergeev, the liberals were the ones at the beginning of the twentieth century coming out with the most ambitious projects of extending Russia's borders. And “only the national liberals were in the strict sense imperialists.”<sup>53</sup> For my part, I want to note that the apologia for the empire, in their execution, turned out to be a special synthesis of specifically Russian with both earlier and modern threads that were introduced from the eighteenth century into the arsenal of rationalizations of the conquests of Peter the Great and his successors. The first, still rooted in the traditions of the idea of Saint Rus' and Moscow as the Third Rome, exposed the distinctive, universal mission of the Russian political community: joining it meant spiritual conversion, the chance to participate in collective salvation, or at least participate in an exceptionally noble form of culture (in Savitskii this is reflected in contrasting a good and just “continental-political” model of Russian imperialism and a bad, exploitative “colonial-economic” model). The newer themes were derived from the concept of the European Enlightenment, justifying the political expansion of empires

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> С.М. Сергеев, “Русский национализм и империализм начала XX века”, in: *Нация и империя в русской мысли...*, p. 16; on the subject of the imperial character of nineteenth-century liberalism see: U.S. Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire. A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*, Chicago, 1999.

by simultaneously expanding the order and lights of civilization. Joining the empire meant civilizing and participating in modernization. In this synthesis, Russia was supposed to be distinguished by a greater openness to other cultures than among their Western imperial competitors, a lower threshold of imperial assimilation, and less civilizational violence. Common to Enlightenment threads, as well as to the traditions of Russian universalism, was the identification of the enemy in the form of “nationalist narrowness” and “egoism” of political projects of “new” nations forming on the periphery of the Empire.

This particular construction of hope for the squaring of the national-imperial circle of the Russian Empire in the victorious war, fought alongside the liberal Western powers, began to crumble quickly after the publication of Savitskii’s text. First came the Gorlice defeat, then further failures at the front, the loss of the entire Kingdom of Poland, the evacuation of Eastern Galicia, further retreat, mass displacement and increasing chaos in the rear. It was more difficult to rationally justify the view of a problem-free acceptance of the Russian imperial project on its non-Russian periphery.

Instead, in these circumstances, increasingly extravagant ideas flourished of again confronting such a heavily experienced Russia with the Western world. Their testimony may be, for example, the two issues of the almanac-manifesto *Scythians* edited in 1916–1917 (with the participation of such creators as Andrei Belii, Alexander Blok, Valeri Briusov, Sergei Esenin, Nikolai Kliuev, Evgeni Zamiatin, and Alexei Remizov). “Scythian” motifs also developed in the compositions of Sergei Prokofiev emerging in the war years; a new “Ionian” style was being created by Igor Stravinskii, where Russia became, in the artistic zeitgeist, the “new Scythia”, between the West, “old” Europe, and “wild” Asia... Nikolai Trubetskoi, the first “apostle” of Eurasianism, soon after announcing his idea, wrote in February 1921 to his friend, Roman Jakobson, that the spirit of Eurasianism was already present in the air, in the atmosphere of the artistic circles of Russia during the war, that he himself absorbed this spirit from the poems of Blok or Esenin. Whoever would like to “induce” this spirit should reach out to his most mature, you can say, form. It will not appear until 30 January 1918, however, collecting experiences from earlier war years with the revolutionary year of 1917 and a deeper memory of Russian culture – the Russian “mental map”. This is, of course, is the poem written by Alexander Blok, “Scythians”.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See a N. Trubetskoi’s letter to R. Jakobson dated 1 Feb. 1921, in: *N.S. Trubetzkoj’s letters and notes*, ed. by R. Jakobson, assist. of H. Baran, O. Ronen, M. Taylor, The Hague and Paris, 1975, pp. 4–11. Cf., among others, А. Блок, А. Белый, *Диалог поэтов о России и революции*,

On the other, totally non-poetical side, Vladimir Lenin was forming his response to the course of the war at the same time. He arranged it in the form of a great vision of the Russian revolution at the head of all anti-colonial movements. The Bolshevik leader, residing in Switzerland, spent the entire first half of 1916, devoted to the development of a comprehensive study: "Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism". Both the significance he gave, borrowed from John Hobson, to the economic scheme of the analysis of imperialism, as well as the numerous notes that Lenin drew up in the course of his work, let us see in his work the preview of a revolution, not only social but also geopolitical. Russia, revolutionary, of course, can and should be at the head of the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa – against the particularly parasitic imperialism of the Western colonial powers that exploit them. The revolution cannot wait for the developed Western countries, for there the working class has become part of the layer exploiting the slave labor of non-European colonial peoples. Lenin notices the tendency towards the transformation of Europe (Western and Central, without Russia) into a luxurious retirement home, served by slaves from Asia and Africa. Therefore, he wants to take into account the possibilities of revolutionary power that lays dormant in non-European countries. The Bolshevik revolution, although it was obviously not the goal to maintain Russian imperialism (this one had to be broken up to launch the entire national potential of rebellion within the Tsarist state), could, however, initiate a protest movement of the colonized world against colonizers, against the West. Lenin's book was published in Russia in April 1917. However, the author ultimately puts the finishing touch on the specific geopolitical interpretation of his work in the preface to the French and German edition, written on 6 July, 1920. Revolutionary Russia is presented there as the leader of a global coalition of colonized peoples, modern "Communards" – against contemporary "Versaillais", empires, above all Anglo-Saxons, who guard the system of world, class and colonial exploitation at the same time. A spark of world rebellion comes out of Russia.<sup>55</sup>

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ed. by М.Ф. Пьяныч, Москва, 1990; M. Bassin, "Asia", in: *Modern Russian Culture*, 2nd edn., ed. by N. Rzhevsky, Cambridge and New York, 2012, pp. 83–87; F. Maes, *A History of Russian Music. From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1996, pp. 216–233; S. Glebov, "The Mongol-Bolshevik revolution: Eurasianist ideology in search for an ideal past", *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 2, 2011, no. 2, p. 109. Cf. D. Grigorova, "'Towards the Sun': Eurasian Historiosophy", *Almanach Via Eurasia*, 2013 [2014], no. 2, pp. 11–13.

<sup>55</sup> V. Lenin, "Imperialism. The Highest Stage of Capitalism", in: id., *Collected works*, vol. 22, Moscow, 1964, pp. 185–304.



Between Blok and Lenin, or in other words – between 1915, the moment that Petr Savitskii's first conception of imperialism appeared and 1920, the time of its accession to the Eurasian movement – was however, in the life of our protagonist and the development of his ideas, a long road, about which the most important points of orientation we have to mention something now. The growing sense of crisis, and then defeat, took the young student of Struve even from a distance, as we have already mentioned he was the secretary of the economic legation of Russia in Norway. He published less. Of the more important texts, it is worth mentioning, printed again in *Russkaia mysl'*, two essays on the development of productive forces and industry in the imperial economy of Russia, as well as a small article on the ideas and effects of the war's economic blockade of Germany by Great Britain, already written from the perspective of the institution in Christiania, and published in the Kadet newspaper *Rech'*. Articles from *Russkaia mysl'* in essence took up the idea of Mendeleev presented above: to ensure stable economic development, Russia must deconcentrate its industrial enterprises, move them from the western European patch of its huge territory and disperse them more evenly, towards Asia, east and south. In a text published in *Rech'*, in a characteristic way, he criticized the hypocrisy of British free trade policy as essentially a brutal tool of London's imperialism.<sup>56</sup>

After returning from Norway to his Petrograd Institute, Savitskii did not have time for either political commentary or for the calm return to his economic studies. The excellent defence of his candidate's thesis in October 1917 guaranteed him not only the highest grade, but also the offer to remain in the political economy department as a doctoral student with a scholarship. We also know that Savitskii had already begun to think about a great synthesis of the empirical and metaphysical foundations of economics. In it he wanted to refer on the one hand to the liberal-positivist ideas of his supervisor – Struve, and on the other, to the work of one of the co-creators of the religious revival of Russia, economist-theologian, Sergei Bulgakov. To the latter, and more specifically his treatise on *Filozofia khoziaistva* ("Philosophy of Economy", 1912), Savitskii intended to introduce to the reflections on the economy of Russia the

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<sup>56</sup> П.Н. Савицкий, "К вопросу о развитии производительных сил", *Русская мысль*, 1916, no. 3 (March), pp. 41–46; id., "Проблема промышленности в хозяйстве имперской России", *Русская мысль*, 1916, no. 11 (Nov.), pp. 54–77; id., "Торгово-политические идеалы блокирования Германии", *Речь*, 1916, 20 Aug., p. 2. Cf. Н.Н. Алеврас, "Начала евразийской концепции в раннем творчестве Г.В. Вернадского и П.Н. Савицкого", *Вестник Евразии*, 1999, no. 1, pp. 5–17.

element of human dignity, the perspective of a responsible host, going beyond the patterns of liberal Western thought. He later succeeded in achieving this goal on emigration, in a master's dissertation (doctoral thesis equivalent) on the subject of *Metafizika khoziaistva* ("Metaphysics of Economy"), which he would submit several years later at the Russian Faculty of Law in Prague.<sup>57</sup>

At the end of 1917, however, he had to face another, non-theoretical, dimension of the revolutionary "economy". And to defend his own home against it. The Ukrainian Central Council and the "Bolshevik gangs" already operating in this area, were fighting over the authority of his familial Chernigov region with the remnants of the republican government of Russia – as Savitskii wrote in a letter to his recent patron from Norway, Konstantin Gulkevich. The young economist had to defend his parents' estate together with fellow officers. Saved from the Bolsheviks by the German offensive of early 1918, Savitskii became a witness to the partition of the Russian Empire in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of March of that year and subjected to the regime of hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi, that was established in Ukraine under the control of the Germans. In November, he volunteered for the Russian officer corps under Skoropadskyi to defend Kiev against the Ukrainian Independence Army of Symon Petliura. He escaped from Kiev under the protection of the French intervention forces to Odessa, to witness the infamous flight of Russia's Western allies. From March 1919, he was already with the units of the "White" army of Anton Denikin in Ekaterinodar. He continued with them in the summer offensive to the north, all the way to Kharkov and Poltava, ultimately to share in Denikin's defeat at the hands of the Red Army in the autumn of that year. In December 1919, he left Rostov for Novorossiisk, and from there sailed to Constantinople as part of the diplomatic mission (as an economic specialist). This mission sought further political and financial support – in Paris and in the United States – for the struggle against the Bolsheviks.<sup>58</sup> During his journey through the landscape of collapse, Savitskii met in 1918 with Boris Savinkov. The famous former Socialist Revolutionary Party terrorist tried to organize an anti-Bolshevik movement, initiating, among other things, a peasant uprising in the Iaroslavl Governorate in July that year. He wanted to seek support from the Western powers for

<sup>57</sup> See: M. Beisswenger, "Metaphysics of the Economy...", pp. 97–102; Й.П. Нильсен, В.А. Карелин, op. cit., pp. 31–32; Cf. S. Bulgakov, *Philosophy of Economy. The World as Household*, transl. and ed. by C. Evtuhov, New Haven and London, 2000.

<sup>58</sup> Discussion of Savitskii's letter to Gulkevich dated Feb. 1920 and of earlier peregrinations after: S. Glebov, "A Life with Imperial Dreams...", pp. 302–303 and id., "The Mongol-Bolshevik revolution...", p. 106. Cf. also M. Beisswenger, *Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii...*, pp. 24–25.

further struggles against the “Reds”. The young ideologist of Russian imperialism asked Savinkov whether and how Russia could rise from the fall and return to the scene of world politics as an independent entity. Savinkov “reassured him” that: even after the catastrophe, Russia would remain a participant in international politics – since there are even colonies and dependent countries within Russia, such as India or Abyssinia...<sup>59</sup>

Savitskii, together with other defenders of the greatness of the Russian Empire, collected experiences of catastrophe and despair in 1917–1919. He was looking for some hope at the bottom. The direction of this search allows for the recreation of his publicist activity that was resumed in 1919. He could undertake it only during the relative stabilization of the southern center of “White” Russia. From March to August 1919, Savitskii collaborated with the *Svobodnaia rech'* newspaper (referring to the Kadet tradition of *Rech'*) published in Ekaterinodar. The main subject of interest of the publicist was the place of the Russian question, the prospect of rebuilding the Empire, on the forum of international relations. The most important forum at that time was, of course, the peace conference in Paris-Versailles. Savitskii comes to comment on its deliberations beyond the framework of dispassionate analysis. But that is why you can see more easily, in the form of heated political commentary, how the emotions of powerlessness lead a geopolitical thinker to seek a new source of strength.

An example is Savitskii's article from May 1919, entitled: “There is no Russia, but there is Lithuania”. The ironic title refers to the information about the meeting of the Polish Affairs Committee at the Paris conference, at which the suggestion to demarcate the Polish-Lithuanian border appeared. The publicist furiously attacks the very fact of deciding by the victorious Western powers – recognizing themselves as “absolute owners of the world” – over the territory that made up the Russian Empire. Decisions are made on this matter without Russia. Since the commission wants to demarcate Polish-Lithuanian borders, it means that it recognizes Russia as non-existent, Lithuania however does exist! This outrages Savitskii most, because, along with Russia, the Provisional Government has already reconciled with the existence of Poland in 1917, and earlier, after all, it vaguely promised the reconstruction of Poland in the text of the “Appeal” of the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich from 1914. So Lithuania is to be an independent state, cut out from Russia, and the “120-million strong

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<sup>59</sup> Discussion of the meeting with Savinkov after: С. Глебов, “Границы империи и модерна. Антиколониальная риторика и теория культурных типов в евразийстве”, *Ab Imperio*, 2003, no. 2, pp. 271–272; cf. different version: А.М. Матвеева, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–80.

Russian nation” is completely ignored (*russkii narod* – here, for Savitskii, means the whole Russian-Ukrainian-Belarusian, East Slavic “core” of the Empire). But Russia has not died yet! Savitskii found the symptoms of her life in the “pulsating heart of Bolshevik Russia.” He is proud that the waves of movement resulting from this pulsation “go through Hungary, Bavaria [in these two countries there were already functioning Soviet republics], Italy, England, France”... Victorious – momentarily – the Western powers can, for now, play around with their puppets, such as Lithuania or Poland, and rearrange them on the map of Eastern Europe, but Russia will return to the big political scene. Russia will appear at the head of the “poor and weak” against the “rich and strong”. The time will come for a rematch.<sup>60</sup>

Two months later, in the article “Rossiia i Polsha” (“Russia and Poland”) Savitskii, calmly now, makes an analysis of the geopolitical position of Eastern Europe after the decisions made in Versailles. He determines that the victorious Western powers, which are creating a new order in this area, excluded the two most interested parties from the decision: Germany and Russia. That is why such an order is not sustainable in the long run. It was the German empires (Prussia and Austria) and Russia that decided about the partition of Poland, reminds Savitskii. He condemns the partitions, but states at the same time that they should be a warning to Polish politicians: without consent from Russia or with Germany – Poland will not be safe. Poles should, if they want to survive, give up fantasies about the Western or transatlantic basis of their security. It will be harder for them to come to an agreement with the Germans: the Poles would have to accept giving up a large part of their ethnographic territory, including access to the sea, vital for their own state. They are left with agreement with Russia. In order to achieve it, Poland should decide on a certain sacrifice of its ambitions in the east. Therefore, it will maintain security within its ethnographic territory. However, it must give up its disastrous interest in Petliura’s “Ukraine” (Savitskii now writes this word in quotes). If the Polish steering circles part with their “imperialist pretentiousness” in the east and short-sighted orientation on Washington and London – only then will they secure the future of their homeland.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> П. Савицкий, “Нет России, но есть Литва”, *Свободная речь*, 1919, 15/28 Мау, pp. 2–3 (thank you very much to Professor Martin Beisswenger for making available to me a copy of this exceptionally difficult to access source, as well as a copy of the second article analyzed below, “Россия и Польша”).

<sup>61</sup> П. Савицкий, “Россия и Польша”, *Свободная речь*, 1919, 12/25 July (pt. 1) and 14/27 July (pt. 2).

The reading of this two-part article makes it possible to undermine the statement by the illustrious researcher of the thought of Savitskii, Sergei Glebov, that his protagonist – “unlike [other] Eurasianists, allowed the possibility of separating the peripheries (*okraini*) from Russia”.<sup>62</sup> Poland – yes, but only to the Bug River. This is the only *okraina*, next to Finland, that, in 1919, “White” Russia agreed to not so much let fall away, but to transform into a satellite of the Russian Empire.<sup>63</sup> Savitskii confirmed this position in his article. Privately, however, he expressed an even more tough opinion. In a letter to his master, Petr Struve, from 2/15 March 1919, he wrote:

I am not afraid for the political greatness of Russia even a little bit; in no shape or form, not by volunteers [“White”], thanks to the Bolsheviks, and Russia will remain the master of the whole area of our Eurasian (*evraziiskikh*) lands, and maybe even not only on it, and no independence (*samostiinost'*), including Finnish-Polish, in the historical perspective, will change this position.<sup>64</sup>

Let us add that this letter is Savitskii's first text, in which he introduces the term “Eurasian” in relation to the proper political territory of Russia, joining it immediately with the possibility of the Bolsheviks playing the “salvific” role of restorers of the Eurasian empire. Savitskii's article on “Russia and Poland” confirms, no less than the participation of the author in defending Kiev against Petliura, that the primary practical problem for him was to maintain the unity of the “great Russian nation”. In 1919 there is no more, there cannot be Ukraine – the descendant of the Cossack colonels despairingly curses reality – it can only be “Ukraine”, an artificial creation of foreign imperialisms.

The most complete picture of Savitskii's geopolitical considerations from the period of the Versailles conference is given by a four-part series of his articles, published in the pages of *Svobodnaia rech'* in spring 1919, also collected and expanded with an additional fifth part, in a separate booklet, published shortly in Ekaterinodar.<sup>65</sup> The Russian publicist likened the situation of Europe in the days of the First World War to that of the period of the French Revolution

<sup>62</sup> С. Глебов, “Границы империи и модерна...”, p. 271.

<sup>63</sup> I write about it further in: A. Nowak, *Polska i “trzy” Rosje. Studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do kwietnia 1920 roku)*, Kraków, 2001, pp. 104–132, 364–377, 458–501.

<sup>64</sup> Quote from Savitskii's letter to Struve dated 2/15 March 1919 after: А.М. Матвеева, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79.

<sup>65</sup> П.[Н.] Савицкий, *Очерки международных отношений*, Екатеринодар, 1919; first prints of the separate parts in *Свободная речь*, 1919, 1/14 May (pt. 1: “Парижская конференция”), 9/22 May (pt. 2: “Германия”), 19 May/1 June (pt. 3: “Гражданская война”), 23 May/4 June (pt. 4: “Сердце мировой истории”). The booklet also includes pt. 5: “Континентальные

and the Napoleonic Wars: a combination of revolution and war, resulting in geopolitical shifts in the scale of the whole continent and even the globe. The year 1919 is definitely not their end. The Versailles Peace Conference is not what the Congress of Vienna was in 1815. It is at best an impermanent diplomatic manoeuvre, like the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807, in the times of Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I. As the revolution in Russia is continuing and developing, there is a revolt in Hungary and Germany, and the momentarily victorious Western powers are trying to marginalize Germany and Russia – there is no speaking of a lasting peace and a new order. So do not worry, my Russian readers – appeals Savitskii. Whatever will be decided in Versailles on the subject of Russia – will not last, it will not matter.<sup>66</sup>

Savitskii immediately points to the main weak point of the emerging “Versailles system”. Of course, it is the German question. In order to solve it, it would be necessary to completely destroy Germany with fire and sword, burn factories, fill the mines – or accept that Germany would quickly rebuild its power as the main force in the center of the European continent. Even if the communist revolution would win in Germany, this will not change the German tendency to a geopolitical rematch. Savitskii states this on the basis of his observations of the first country, in which the communist power has already solidified: “the militant internationalism of the Russian Soviet power is transforming and it should inevitably turn into militant Russian imperialism.”<sup>67</sup> Germany, every Germany, will claim its “place under the sun” and demolish the restrictions imposed on it by the Western powers. Turning to the situation in his native empire, Savitskii established a positive evolution in the civil war itself. Its essence was not necessarily at all the advantage of “Whites” over the “Reds”, but the mere fact that these two poles of attracting and rebuilding the lands of the Empire had already been formed. They overcome the tendencies, still dominating in 1918, to announce successive “bastard” separatisms, which the author also calls “mongrels” (*shavki*) of the Russian revolution and again indicates as the most dangerous among them – Ukrainian *samostiiniks*.<sup>68</sup>

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гарантии и океаническое равновесие”. The booklet was reprinted in: id., *Континент Евразия*, ed. by А.Г. Дугин, Москва, 1997, pp. 382–398.

<sup>66</sup> See П. Савицкий, “Очерки международных отношений”, pt. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pt. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pt. 3. In a letter to Struve in March 1919, Savitskii was already expressing his conviction that the “Reds” would emerge victorious from the civil war. Although the “Whites” outclassed them with their bravery in battle, the Bolsheviks show a decisive superiority as

In the next part of his reflections, Savitskii prepares his readers for the conclusion that the victory of the “Reds” does not have to be a bad solution at all from the point of view of the political interests of “Indivisible Great Russia”. Although the Bolsheviks renounced this idea in a disgraceful manner in the Brest peace with Germany in March 1918, they had already shown that it was only a tactical concession.

Since the armored fist of the German Empire had only just ceased being a threat, the Soviet authorities actually began to stick to this principle [Indivisible Great Russia]. As Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine and Latvia were united back, so too today, it brings back Bessarabia. One can say with full conviction that if the Soviet power had defeated Denikin and Kolchak, it would join back the entire area of the former Russian Empire and, quite likely, in its conquests would cross the old boundaries.<sup>69</sup>

Savitskii returns to the great geopolitical scene in the summary – the fifth part – of his series, appropriately titled: *Kontinentalnie garantii i okeanicheskoe ravnovesie* (“Continental Guarantees and Oceanic Balance”). He puts forth a simple thesis: Russia and Germany, the two strongest nations in Europe (here he still does not negate the connection between Russia and Europe) and at the same time, two nations excluded from the system created by the victorious Western powers, will inevitably seek cooperation which should overthrow this system. Germany can conduct its geopolitical rematch to the east and west. If they limit their ambitions in the east, strategic cooperation with Russia will allow them to return to the dominant position in the western part of the continent. Savitskii marks the western borders of geopolitical interests of Russia where Danilevskii once indicated them (and also referred to by Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov). It is the line: “Poznań – Czech mountains [probably the Ore Mountains and Bohemian Forest, separating the Czech Republic from its German and Austrian neighbors] – Trieste”. In this way, “the Slav idea would be fully realized”, based on “strengthening the alliance of western [ethnographic Poland and Czechoslovakia?] and south-western Slav states with Russia”. However, if Germany again succumbs, as during the First World War, to the temptation to build its *Mitteleuropa* east of this line, and especially if they return to the infamous tradition of supporting Ukrainian *samostiiniks* and decide to “cradle to its bosom the

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organizers of the administration and efficient managers of society. See the discussion of and quotations from this letter: A.M. Матвеева, op. cit., pp. 80–82.

<sup>69</sup> П. Савицкий, “Очерки международных отношений”, pt. 4.

old German friend – Petliura” – then Berlin will again find itself in deadly pincers. Russia will once again come out against them in a coalition with the Western powers.<sup>70</sup>

As can be seen, the Eurasianist idea had not yet been crystallized. Although the name itself, as we mentioned a moment ago, appeared in a letter to Struve from the same period in which *Ocherki mezhdunarodnikh otnoshenii* (“Sketches on International Relations”) was being created, yet Savitskii remains on the plane of *ad hoc* geopolitical speculations. Russia is considered in them as a European power, the largest – next to Germany – but still primarily European. It is not an anti-West yet. It can, together with the Germans, destroy the political order dictated by the Anglo-Saxon, Western powers. But it can also return to cooperation, to the “oceanic balance” with the Anglo-Saxons – provided that they accept Russian domination over the eastern half of the continent: from Constantinople and the Balkans to the western border of Poland and the Czech lands.

This vision, in line with the most ambitious goals that Russia’s political elite – from Minister Sazonov to Struve – had put before Russia at the moment of entering the Great War, was subjected to a brutal test of reality. It finally closed in 1920, as if in three stages. At the beginning of that year, when the scale of victory in the civil war had already turned definitely to the side of the “Reds”, and Denikin’s forces were pushed to the shores of the Black Sea, the issue of “White” Russia was officially and factually abandoned by the government of Great Britain. This was the first stage. Shrunken down to only Crimea, on which remained the last foothold, under the leadership of the brave General Petr Wrangel, anti-Bolshevik Russia had one more, weak hope for help from the West – in the summer of the same year. In the government of Wrangel, the leader of the foreign affairs department was Petr Struve. When the Red Army stormed Warsaw, he hoped that the eventual collapse of Poland would ultimately force the Western powers to act against the Bolsheviks. He only received *de facto* recognition for the Wrangel government from France, 10–11 August. The British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, was negotiating with Lenin’s envoys in London at the same time. Poland did not fall, the Red Army did not directly threaten the West, the last bastion of “White” Russia did not receive any effective help. This was the second stage of the dashing of the last hopes for Russia’s return to the role of a participant in the concert

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<sup>70</sup> Id., “Очерки международных отношений”, pt. 5: “Континентальные гарантии и океаническое равновесие”, in: id., *Континент Евразия...*, pp. 393–398.



of the great powers, in which she could look for some agreement with the victorious camp of the liberal West to satisfy her “imperial patriots”.<sup>71</sup>

Savitskii was directly involved in the practical attempts of “White” Russian diplomats that filled out both of these stages. As we have already mentioned, at the end of December 1919, he found himself (as an economic specialist) in the fold of the mission that General Denikin still wanted to send to the United States with a request for financial help for further struggle with the Bolsheviks. The mission did not reach Washington. From Novorossiisk, through Constantinople, Savitskii and the other representatives made it to Paris. He stayed there from February to March 1920. He observed the functioning of the diplomacy of the Western powers and their attitude towards the Russian question up close, precisely at the moment when the British government was already openly pushing the idea of starting talks, at the beginning on trade, with “Red” Moscow. In March and April he was again in Constantinople – this time as the plenipotentiary of the Union of *Zemstvos* for which he was preparing an analysis of the possibilities of organizing care for Russian refugees in Turkey. Struve summoned him at the end of April to Sevastopol, the last “capital” of anti-Bolshevik Russia. He entrusted his student with the function of head of the economic department, within General Wrangel’s foreign affairs office that he led. As personal secretary of Struve, Savitskii went to Paris again at the beginning of the summer of 1920. He was with his chief when, during the Allied conference in Spa (at the beginning of July), he tried once more to convince the leaders of Western European powers to recognize Wrangel’s government in the face of the expected fall of Poland under the pressure of the Red Army.<sup>72</sup> Savitskii did not attach any serious hopes to these efforts. In July he had already sent a letter to his parents from Paris, in which he declared himself for the first time as a promoter of a new idea: Eurasianism.

I’m beginning to miss the East... I feel that my heart recognizes my homeland only in Eurasia, among the fields of Chernigov, the steppes of Kuban, under the palm trees of Batumi, in the hubbub of Constantinople! I am working on propagating “Eurasianism”... and decent Europeans are listening to my heretical prophecies in horror...<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> See: R. Pipes, *Struve. Liberal on the Right...*, pp. 282–296; A. Nowak, *Pierwsza zdrada Zachodu. 1920: zapomniany appeasement*, Kraków, 2015 (here a broader analysis of David Lloyd George’s policy towards Russia in 1920).

<sup>72</sup> See: M. Beisswenger, *Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii...*, p. 25; S. Glebov, “A Life with Imperial Dreams...”, p. 303; R. Pipes, *Struve. Liberal on the Right...*, p. 289.

<sup>73</sup> Cit. from Savitskii’s letter to his parents dated 4/17 July 1920, after: S. Glebov, “A Life with Imperial Dreams...”, p. 304.

Although he still returned with Struve to Sevastopol, on the way, at Constantinople, he leased a farm in Narli, on the Asian bank of the Bosphorus, for his parents and brother. And there he settled, when in November 1920 the Red Army captured Crimea. The remaining defenders of the former Great Russia were then evacuated to the area around Constantinople. There was only a choice between emigration and a return to Russia – though already Bolshevik. It was the final, third stage of the political experiences of 1920, which somewhat closed the period of dramatic disappointments related to the Great War and the alliance with the Western powers and the letdowns experienced by the Russian imperial elite.

The disappointment that was felt so painfully, however, does not lead to the disenchantment with the world, but, on the contrary, to the attempt to “enchant” it, to take into account the power of the ideological formula that tries to invalidate the depressing reality and read into it hopes for a great rematch. In Germany, experiencing its defeat, such an effective formula was discovered, for example, in the first volume of Oswald Spengler’s (1880–1936) – published in 1918 – *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (“Decline of the West”) and in its political complement, the 1919 thesis published by him *Preussentum und Sozialismus* (“Prussianism and Socialism”). There is no humanity, there are great cultures; Western culture has entered a phase of crisis – into a stage of old age and artificiality at the same time. That is a civilization characterized by a praise of expansion, imperialism and a specific (in this case Prussian) form of socialism as a response to British capitalism, Anglo-Saxon dictatorship and “style” of money – these are the simplest slogans/keys to the new “enchantment” of the post-war reality of defeat that could also be interpreted from Spengler’s works. Not only by Germans, but by the first Russian readers too.<sup>74</sup>

Among them was Nikolai Trubetskoi (1890–1938), philosopher, linguist and historiosophist, rightly called the first animator of the Eurasian movement. A representative of the aristocratic-intellectual elite of Russia, the son of the rector of the Moscow State University, the nephew of the diplomat cited here, a friend of Struve, Prince Grigori, and the liberal-Christian critic of nationalism, Prince Evgeni, had long sought appropriate expression for a new version of Russian imperial nationalism. As he wrote about this to his friend, also an eminent linguist (the creator of structuralism), Roman Jakobson – already in 1909 he

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<sup>74</sup> See, e.g.: A. Kołakowski, *Spengler*, Warszawa, 1981; L. Luks, “Die Ideologie der Eurasier im zeitgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang”, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 34, 1986, pp. 374–395.

wanted to write a trilogy titled *Opravdanie natsionalizma* (“A Justification of Nationalism”). However, he found a form for his reflections and emotions only in exile, after the Bolshevik victory in the civil war, when he settled in Sofia. He no longer dealt with the justification of Russian nationalism, but the moral condemnation of the West. He presented them in the book *cum* passionate accusation: *Evropa i chelovechestvo* (“Europe and Humanity”) published in Sofia in 1920.<sup>75</sup>

In it, Trubetskoi takes on ideological themes introduced long ago into Russian reflection on (bad) relations between Russia and Europe. Like Danilevskii after the Crimean War, now the structuralist-emigrant after the Great War, defines the West as an alien, hostile civilization, named (following Danilevskii’s terminology) the “Romano-Germanic” type. And just like his predecessor, he is trying to “scientifically” discredit the European claims to universalism. Here is the core of his moral argument. Europeans (Romano-Germans) proclaim the need to go beyond narrow, nationalist chauvinisms in order to invite to the cosmopolitan, supranational, ideal civilization. In essence – this civilization expresses their chauvinistic designs and interests. This pseudo-universal civilization, which is now to be imitated by everyone, is simply “Romano-Germanic” culture. Under the slogan of “civilizing” and thus joining to the only model of progress or development that is allegedly contained in it, what is actually being carried out is the colonization and extermination of other cultures existing in the world and their subordination to Europe. The tools of this process are the intelligentsia of countries thus colonized, who assume as their task the systematic uplift of the “savages” of their native culture to the higher rungs of the ladder of progress. As an argument in favor of their actions, they are served by the thesis that “savages” after all, always lose the fight against the “civilized” forces of Europe. Trubetskoi answers with moral contempt: this is the argument of strength, Gallic *vae victis* and Germanic vandalism.

He himself develops, above all, another counterargument – in view of the thesis that Europe has such a cultural heritage, which is obviously greater than that of some African or Asian “primitives”. Here, Trubetskoi introduces for the first time, probably with such consistency, a way of reasoning that will actually triumph in twentieth century cultural anthropology, becoming an element of political correctness at the beginning of the twenty-first century. According to him, it is impossible to objectively state any superiority of European culture over others, for example over the culture of the Bushmen. This cannot be done in any other way than by taking subjective measures of European culture.

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<sup>75</sup> Н. Трубецкой, *Европа и человечество*, София, 1920.

Cultures cannot be hierarchized, each creates a specific structure of values – declares Trubetskoi. Under the slogan of “civilizing”, there is an expansion of the insatiable Romano-Germanic *Kulturträger*, its associated militarism and “the aesthetic-free, anxious industrial life”. Trubetskoi therefore uses words strikingly similar to those written at practically the same moment in July 1920, by Vladimir Lenin, in the aforementioned preface to the French edition of “Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism”.

Let us quote now the words of the Russian emigrant from Sofia:

If only humanity – not the kind of humanity that Romano-Germans like to speak of, but true humanity, consisting mainly of Slavs, Chinese, Indians, Arabs, negroes and other tribes, which all, without difference of skin color, groan under the heavy oppression of Romano-Germans and consume their national strength to extract raw materials for European factories – if all this humanity united in the universal struggle with their oppressors – Romano-Germans, it must be assumed that sooner or later it would have been possible to throw away the hated yoke and wipe out from the face of the earth those greedy people [i.e., Europeans – “Romano-Germans”] and their culture.<sup>76</sup>

In order for such a “universal uprising” to succeed, it is necessary first and foremost to change the awareness of the “intelligentsia of Europeanized nations”. It is necessary to help them tear the blindfold of the ideology of European superiority from their eyes. For this purpose, one must give up any particular ambitions. The enemy is one, the global movement against the colonial domination of the European “civilization” should also be united.<sup>77</sup>

Trubetskoi does not totally go so far as to trace the path of Danilevskii and other torchbearers of geopolitical conflict between Russia and Europe. He builds a romantic vision of the rebellion of the wronged and oppressed from all over the world against one center of oppression: Europe/the West. Russia is not fighting for its interests, it is not fighting to maintain its imperial structure (about problems connected with it, for example about Ukrainian “separatism” or about Russia’s borders overall – Trubetskoi does not say a word). After the experiences of the Great War, in the face of the reality of the “dictatorship of Versailles” of the Western powers, it only initiates an anti-colonial movement on a global scale. It was supposed to be a moral impulse, not a geopolitical program.<sup>78</sup>

In the ideology that can already be called Eurasianism, this “impulse” was transformed only by Savitskii. In a critical dialectic with Trubetskoi’s thought, his

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<sup>76</sup> Cit. after the edition: id., *Европа и человечество*, Москва, 2015, p. 104.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. С. Глебов, “Границы империи и модерна...”, pp. 267–290.

conception of defending Russian imperialism towards the challenge of modern ethno-nationalisms finally crystallized. It was also a geopolitical response to the defeat in the Great War – which for him, as well as for Trubetskoi, testified to the failure of liberal modernization. Sergei Glebov, an excellent researcher of the history of Eurasianism, also noticed the phenomenon of a particular generational rebellion at the moment of birth of this movement: the rebellion of sons formed during the period of revolution (1905 and 1917) and the Great War, against fathers, shaped by earlier hopes for the evolutionary modernization of Russia.<sup>79</sup>

At the age of twenty-five, Savitskii was maturing to opposition to the line that had brought him into political and intellectual life by his “spiritual father” – Petr Struve, still striving to keep hope for a great Russia, but in Europe. Nikolai Trubetskoi, through his anti-European manifesto, expressed protest against the occidentalist-liberal orientation represented (in different variants) by his father, Sergei, and his uncles – Grigori and Evgeni. It should be added here that young Trubetskoi was the voice of a small, but extremely resilient, émigré milieu that formed around him in Sofia. They co-created this environment and, at the same time, its institutional base – the Russian-Bulgarian Publishing House – Petr Suvchinskii (1892–1985) and Prince Andrei Lieven (1884–1949), soon joined by Georgi Frolovskii (1893–1979). Suvchinskii, a descendant of a noble Polish family from the Poltava region, was a musicologist, literature specialist and art critic, a friend of, among others, Igor Stravinskii and Sergei Prokofiev, who supported their “Ionian-Scythian” fascinations during the First World War. Prince Lieven, the son of the president of the Russian State Bank and a descendant of a Baltic German aristocratic family that had served the Empire for generations, would be momentarily fascinated with the Eurasian idea, so that from 1924 he chose the way of an Orthodox priest. Florovskii, the son of the rector of the Orthodox seminary in Odessa – after a long cooperation with the Eurasianists (finally ended in 1928) – would also turn to a spiritual vocation, becoming one of the most outstanding Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century. Everyone in any case in this group (except for Lieven, who was several years older) was not yet thirty at the time of the proclamation of *Evropa i chelovechestvo*. And everyone was ready then to challenge the recognized authorities of the older generation of the coalescing emigration.

They wanted to present their diagnosis of the defeat of Great Russia in the fire of the Great War – and their original, forward-looking proposal for

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<sup>79</sup> See S. Glebov, “The Mongol-Bolshevik revolution...”, pp. 107–108.

rebuilding the imperial homeland. They intended to do so without quarrelling with the minor émigré politics of their older companions in misery. Lieven invited Savitskii to join the Sofia group, at the “Eurasianist” gathering planned for the end of 1920. He sent this invitation at the end of November, when Savitskii, just after the Crimean catastrophe, settled with his parents in Narli near Constantinople. They probably met and discussed closer cooperation earlier, in August, when Savitskii came back from Paris through Sofia to Crimea.<sup>80</sup> Savitskii accepted the invitation of the Sofia group with enthusiasm.

His two-time stay in Paris in 1920, the capital of diplomacy of the victorious Western powers, was for him an opportunity for one more important intellectual-political inspiration, the echoes of which can be found in his response to this invitation. Such bitter inspiration was the experience of real politics, seen closely in the British and the French rendition, at a time when the fate of Eastern Europe was hanging in the balance on the Vistula, in the clash of the Red Army with the Polish Army. The Red Army became a factor already influencing this great geopolitical policy. Savitskii’s principal, Struve, was by then only a weak petitioner on behalf of the “former” Russia, actually limited to Crimea. It was a lesson in brutal realism.

Before he could formulate his own concept of Eurasianism, however, Savitskii would receive another important lesson – from another political theoretician of the “great chessboard”. In 1919, Halford Mackinder, mentioned earlier, announced the book, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. He tried to give in it a broader account of the causes of the Great War and a proposal for the lasting protection of peace for future generations – a peace based on the geopolitical domination of Anglo-Saxon powers and the stabilization of liberal democracy. Dedicated to the leaders of the victorious powers, the book was energetically discussed in diplomatic salons and in café debates in Paris for over a year after.<sup>81</sup> Savitskii had heard about Mackinder back then, and he certainly talked about him and his ideas many times, even with Struve.

The immediate reason for the necessary interest in the concepts of the British geographer by the young Russian was the fact of Mackinder’s direct and passionate involvement in contacts between the British government and Denikin. The “father” of British geopolitics, a conservative MP since 1910, was afraid in

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<sup>80</sup> See a letter of A. Lieven to Savitskii from the end of November 1920, in: “Письма А.А. Ливена к П.Н. Савицкому (1920–1922) и письмо П.Н. Савицкого к А.А. Ливену (1920)”, ed. by М.Э. Байсвенгер, *Transactions of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in the U.S.A.*, 37, 2011–2012, pp. 14–15.

<sup>81</sup> See H.J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, London, 1919.

1919 of a unification of the land powers defeated in the Great War – Bolshevik Russia and rematch-focused Germany. He was looking for practical ways to protect against such an eventuality. He saw it in the anti-Bolshevik agreement between “White” Russia, still fighting at the end of 1919 – and its immediate neighbors, the recent *okraini* (peripheries) of the empire in the west, with Poland at the forefront. He accepted the mission of the intermediary in this matter, offered to him on 23 October by the new Foreign Office head, Lord George Curzon: the mission of a special deputy to General Denikin and to Poland and other “borderland countries” (that is, Bulgaria and Romania). On 13 December, Mackinder arrived in Warsaw, where he was received in the Belvedere Palace by Marshal Józef Piłsudski two days later. He arrived at Denikin’s headquarters at the turn of December and January. Savitskii could not meet Mackinder directly then, because several weeks earlier he sailed – as we have already mentioned – from Novorossiisk as a part of the diplomatic and financial mission with which he would reach Paris. It is difficult to imagine, however, that at that time, Struve and Savitskii did not consider the concept that brought the famous geographer from Oxford on the mission of last resort to the shore of the Black Sea.

Discussing Mackinder’s mission is, of course, not our goal. It is enough here to state that it failed. Piłsudski was thinking rather about an independent, Polish confrontation with the Bolsheviks. Denikin did not want to give up a millimeter in the political conditions for a possible agreement with the governments of states formed on the periphery of the former Empire, especially regarding the recognition of Poland’s pretensions to any territories east of the Bug. Most importantly, just after Mackinder’s return to London, on 29 January 1920, the British Prime Minister Lloyd George ultimately renounced any anti-Bolshevik action, as well as support for “borderland states” in this action.<sup>82</sup>

If, therefore, Savitskii drew lessons from the unsuccessful mission of Mackinder, it was namely that, it is difficult for the cause of Great Russia to seek support from London’s policy or in an understanding with the governments

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<sup>82</sup> See Denikin’s note for H. Mackinder dated 23 Jan. 1920, Columbia University Library in New York, Bakmeteff Archive, E. Sablin Collection, box 18, t. *re* Nationalities Question; cf. also a letter of Denikin to Mackinder from 14 Jan. 1920, in: *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Ser. 1, vol. 3, ed. by E.L. Woodward, London, 1949, pp. 792–793, and also Mackinder’s report from the entire mission – *ibid.*, pp. 768–786; see also: *The Churchill Documents*, ed. by M. Gilbert, vol. 9: *Disruption and Chaos, July 1919 – March 1921*, Hillsdale, 1977, p. 1020 (Cabinet minutes, 29 Jan. 1920). I write more about the Mackinder mission in: A. Nowak, *Polska i trzy Rosje. Studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do kwietnia 1920 roku)*, 3rd edn., Kraków, 2015, pp. 389–410.

of the new nation states, which had just emerged from the rubble of the Romanov Empire or its weak neighbors. One can assume, however, that he was more interested in the lecture on geopolitical strategy that Mackinder presented in his aforementioned synthesis of his vision of the global great game after the war – *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. The British geographer now wrote about the necessity of combining the noble idealism projected by the winners in the League of Nations – with a policy of real protection against the possible recidivism of aspirations for world domination by the defeated powers. He warned: Germany and Russia will not soon become pillars of the democratic world order. Developing his previous concept on the key meaning of the “heart of the land”, an area that allowed domination of the Eurasian supercontinent, Mackinder now paid special attention to Eastern Europe – as the key to mastering the Eurasian “Heartland”.<sup>83</sup> While the United Kingdom previously counteracted Russian expansion in Asia, from the late nineteenth century, the threat of German supremacy over Eastern Europe and the move of the German Empire towards Turkey, and through it – the Middle East – laid the foundations for the tactical coalition of the British lion with the Russian bear. The Great War broke out because of the Slavs’ revolt against Germanic domination: from the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria in 1878, with the consequence-free annexation of this province in 1908, to the fear of the swallowing up of Serbia in 1914 and Russia’s capitulation to such another humiliation on the part of the German Empire and her Austro-Hungarian ally. The Germans wanted to be masters of the Slavs. If they succeeded, they would gain control over all of Eastern Europe. In 1917, when tsardom fell and Russia withdrew from the war and the United States entered the fray, the geopolitical situation cleared up to the end: it took the form of a clash of the undemocratic land powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) with the democratic sea powers (Anglo-Saxons, with the help of France and Italy). The final siege of land powers by the maritime powers began.<sup>84</sup> It ended with a great triumph of the latter.

But this success, the success of the principles of the democratic order of the world represented by the maritime powers – of which diplomats in Versailles spoke – does not have to be permanent. In order that Germany or Russia, and

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<sup>83</sup> See H.J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals...*, p. 194: here appears Mackinder’s famous formula: “Who rules Eastern Europe – rules over the Heartland; who rules the Heartland – rules over the World Island [a concept including three continents: Asia, Europe and Africa]; who rules the World Island – dominates the world.”

<sup>84</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 178–179.



especially a Russian-German agreement, does not lead to a great geopolitical rematch of the defeated empires, the democratic, victorious powers must take a serious interest in the area of Eastern Europe. It is necessary to support the construction – between Russia and Germany – of the “middle tier”: from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from Estonia and Lithuania, through the key in this entire structure, Poland, then further on to Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria and Greece. Strengthening the stability and independence of this “middle tier” both from Germany and Russia, should be the geopolitical goal of the victorious maritime powers, the victorious West. Mackinder argued that this was the only way to achieve the desired balance in Eastern Europe. In other words, the only way to secure a new democratic order before the recurrence of the Prussian-Austrian temptation to install in Eastern Europe a Germanic *Kultur* and the economic reign of the *Herrenvolk*, as well as against a new assault of anarchism and Bolshevism going from Russia to Europe.<sup>85</sup>

The reading of Mackinder’s book, which made a big splash in 1919–1920, and even its reviews or discussions, could evoke a specific echo in Russian commentators of Versailles politics. They should have been aroused by such a suggestively presented vision of a geopolitical conflict between the sea powers and land empires, a construction project (based on Anglo-Saxon power) of the “middle tier” – a kind of protective bulwark against Great Russia on the “traditional” area of its influence, that is in Eastern Europe, and above all, a key concept for the global reign of the Heartland. This concept introduced by Mackinder overlaid almost exactly with the borders of the Russian Empire (with the addition of northern Persia, part of Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan). However, it did not include Eastern Europe, that is, those countries that Mackinder had located in his vision of the “middle tier”, i.e. the new Baltic republics and Poland, with its underdetermined borders in the east.

The survival of the unity of the Heartland depends on the outcome of the struggle which will have to take place with the aggressive West and the “Romano-Germanic civilization”, with Europe, with the sea powers striving for permanent paralysis of Russia, which would be the key to their further rule over the world... Whether such thoughts appear in Savitskii’s mind in 1920 – we have no direct evidence. Indirectly, they will be revealed in the first reaction

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<sup>85</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 205–215. See also, among others, newer analyses of Mackinder’s work: L.M. Ashworth, “Realism and the Spirit of 1919: Halford Mackinder, Geopolitics and the Reality of the League of Nations”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 20, 2010, pp. 1–23; A. Nowak, “Eastern Europe and the British Imperial Imagination, 1914–1919”, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 52, 2017, special issue 3, pp. 5–26.

under his authorship to the project of fighting with the West, which Nikolai Trubetskoi presented. Savitskii presented it in the pages of *Russkaia mysl'*, reactivated by Struve. The place where the émigré life of the renowned publication began was – Sofia. Savitskii went from Constantinople to the Bulgarian capital at the beginning of January 1921 to take up the role of the technical editor of the renewed monthly. In Sofia, of course, he established permanent and intense contacts with Trubetskoi, Suvchinskii and Florovskii. He entered the environment of those that would come to be known as Eurasianists.<sup>86</sup>

In a review published in the first, double issue of the émigré *Russkaia mysl'* from Trubetskoi's book, he proposed a geopolitical correction of this ideological manifesto and provided justification for this name of the new ideology: Eurasianism. In this extensive text we can see a summary of Savitskii's hitherto short, but very intensely experienced intellectual path, and at the same time specific "adventures" of the Russian imperial idea of the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The title is of a rather programmatic character: *Evropa i Evrazia. Po povodu broshuri kn. N.S. Trubetskogo "Evropa i Chelovechestvo"* ("Europe and Eurasia: Regarding the Booklet of Prince N.S. Trubetskoi 'Europe and Humanity'").<sup>87</sup>

Thus, standing against a specifically defined enemy – Europe – there is no abstract "humanity", but instead a no less specifically defined civilizational and political whole: Eurasia. Savitskii leads his readers to this conclusion in three steps. The first is a partial criticism of Trubetskoi's assumption that all cultures are equal. Of course, in terms of their internal goals, their ideology – culture, they retain exceptional value, incomparable and not open to hierarchization. However, culture is also based on empirical knowledge and technological capabilities that it managed to accumulate. In this respect, there are higher and lower cultures, or rather stronger and weaker cultures. The former are capable of effective defence. The latter – lose in intercultural competition, or more precisely: in the confrontation between political communities that protect and create particular cultures. Trubetskoi exaggerates with his romantic idealization of the "savage". Such an attitude may threaten with a fatal cult of weakness. The call to rebel against the "insolent lie" of European civilization should take into account the factor of **force**.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup> See: M. Beisswenger, *Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii...*, p. 26; S. Glebov, "A Life with Imperial Dreams...", pp. 304–305.

<sup>87</sup> П.Н. Савицкий, "Европа и Евразия. (По поводу брошюры кн. Н.С. Трубецкого 'Европа и Человечество')", *Русская мысль*, 1921, no. 1–2, pp. 119–138.

<sup>88</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 120–124.

This is the second level of Savitskii's analysis. Since you need to give strength to a rightful idea (the fight against the West), you have to ask, where do you look for it. Papuans, Negroes [that is how Savitskii wrote the word], Malays – however ideal their internal cultural structure may be, they will not be able to defend it against “Romano-Germanic” aggression. The author of the review warns: if we want to defend our inner identity/cultural freedom, we must be capable to defend – by force, including militarily – our independence against the designs of the enemy. The noble idea itself, the beautiful slogan of a universal fight against Western colonialism, is not enough. The force factor cannot be associated with an abstract “humanity” but with a specific political community. The world is already a mutually related whole (the Great War ultimately proved it), and the weak will not achieve freedom in it – they can only count on replacing the “Romano-Germanic yoke” with a different one. The world cannot defend against such a fate, but Russia can: this is a concrete thing, it is a reality to which Prince Trubetskoi, as if groping for it, leads. His reviewer dots the “i”: not humanity against Europe, but Russia against Europe! This is the right action program.

For Trubetskoi, Russia is only an example of the terrible Europeanisation of the elites – a phenomenon occurring in all of “humanity” conquered by the West. For Savitskii, on the other hand, Russia is to be the proper subject of the fight against “Romano-Germanic” global colonialism. The emigrant from Chernigov draws attention to two manifestations of Russia's maturing towards playing this role. The first is “self-confirmation” by the great literature and art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Russian culture emerges from its earlier inferiority complex towards the West, and at the same time finds its uniqueness. The second phenomenon that Savitskii draws attention to – with hope! – is Bolshevism, born in the Great War and the revolution. The émigré ideologist sees in the new authorities in Russia the fundamental rejection of this attitude, which previously dominated among the Russian intelligentsia, also influencing Marxists-“westernizers” (Savitskii does not explain if he meant only Mensheviks, or also the early work of his master up to that time – Struve). Bolshevism does not care about any prototype in the West and not only does not intend to transform Russia into the image and likeness of Europe, but it is ready to conquer the West and transform it according to its essentially Russian patterns. Thus, the victory of Bolshevism means a fundamental breakthrough in the current relations between Russia and Europe. No longer is the West now the active, expansive side in these relations – but the Bolshevik Russia. Let us add that Savitskii did not become an enthusiast of Bolshevik ideology,

especially its practice. He was convinced that the Bolshevik system would sooner or later be replaced by others, probably better ones. However, he assessed the effects of the victory of the “Reds” from the point of view of the program of emancipation from the influence of the West and sharpening this fundamental axis of opposition: Russia – Europe. After Bolshevik rule, it will no longer be possible to return to the role of Russia as a slavish imitator of the West. And that was supposed to be the most important thing.<sup>89</sup> This is how it was to be, on the condition, however, that the political community of imperial Russia (Bolshevik or not) would settle on the foundations of Savitskii’s described geopolitical foundation. This description is the third level of the analysis presented by him. Here, in the pages of the first emigration numbers of *Russkaia mysl’* from 1921, Savitskii reveals for the first time the vision of Eurasianism. Russia against Europe – this is not enough, because geographically (and culturally) Russia finds itself in large part in Europe. At the same time, however, it goes beyond its borders, moving to the territory of Asia – and creates a separate whole. It constitutes, emphasizes Savitskii, the original world, different from “Europe” and from “Asia”. Its nucleus is made up of three great plains: Russian (which he also calls the White Sea-Caucasus), Siberian and Turkestanian. Let us recall – it corresponds exactly to the area of the Heartland, key for global rule in the world of geopolitical imagination of Mackinder. Savitskii briefly presents the uniqueness of the climate, and even the soil of this area – and suggests a name for it: “Eurasia”. As in the above-mentioned Lamanskii’s scheme, known to the graduate of the Petrograd Polytechnic Institute, in essence, “Eurasia” is the third primary element of geographical Eurasia – next to “Europe” (in the narrower meaning) and “Asia”.<sup>90</sup>

The western boundary of this Russian “Eurasia” was modestly delineated by Savitskii: he marks it more or less along the Pulkovo meridian (the meridian running through the Observatory in Pulkovo near Saint Petersburg, meridian 30°19,6’ east of Greenwich) was treated in imperial Russia as the basic axis of geographical orientation. Let us note, therefore, that this meant that the boundary of Russian “Eurasia” includes in the west Saint Petersburg/Petrograd, south of it Vitebsk (but not necessarily Minsk), further Mogilev, of course, Savitskii’s hometown Chernigov, Kiev, up to Odessa on the Black Sea. Thus, almost all of Belarus and the western half of Ukraine would not necessarily be an inalienable part of the “Eurasian” core of Russian anti-Europe. And this

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<sup>89</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 126–130.

<sup>90</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 132–134.

ambiguity, especially in relation to Ukraine, would also remain the subject of controversy in subsequent variants of the Eurasian doctrine.<sup>91</sup> In fact, Savitskii immediately indicates the place of this border zone in his concept. "Eurasia" is an attempt to justify on a new "scientific" basis, wider than ethnographic Russia, imperial unity, around the Russian center. In this way it encompasses, "the whole circle of the Turanian, Mongolian, Aryan, Iberian [Georgian], and Finnish nations comes to it [i.e. to Russia]." Apart from this tight circle, there is also an outer circle of nations, also "adjoining the borders of Russia". These nations, "without entering the makeup of the territory of Russia and striving in the majority of cases to maintain their full political independence from it, are nevertheless associated with Russia with a certain community of spiritual character and come common racial and ethnographic features." These nations do not belong simultaneously to the "Romano-Germanic" circle and are exposed to its expansion and colonial practices. Therefore, these nations and countries (states) give hope to the ideologist of Eurasianism, that they with great probability will become allies of Russia and join it in a great fight against "Europe". Savitskii mentions in general that this applies to "some Slavic nations" (here certainly belong Ukraine and Belarus, but the nations of southern and even western Slavdom may also belong), as well as the Turks, Persians, Mongols, and even the Chinese from beyond the Great Wall...<sup>92</sup> In the face of the visible difficulties on the western end, however, Savitskii transferred the strategic point of support of the future imperial reconquest of Russia to the Asian area, promising even more strength, and at the same time more remoteness from the direct influence of the "Romano-Germanic", and indeed Anglo-Saxon, opponent.

"Eurasia" turns out to be a way to find new forces, even beyond the pre-war borders of the Romanov Empire, to confront the West and also going beyond the old schemes of the solely pan-Slavic Empire. Savitskii is actually returning to this point, to his model, presented over five years earlier, at the threshold of the Great War, of the creation of the Empire. Ethnographic Russia is the imperializing center of "Eurasia", it creates from it a new, great "nation". Thanks to this, it will be able to effectively extend the boundaries of its imperial project – both to Eastern Europe (with its Slavic nations), as well as to the far eastern and central territories of Asia. Mackinder's nightmare, adopted here, in the shape of a specific geopolitical proposal. At the same time, Savitskii, in order to satisfy idealistic motives, emphasized in the Trubetskoi

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. M. Beisswenger, "Eurasianism Then and Now...", pp. 27–51.

<sup>92</sup> See П.Н. Савицкий, *Европа и Евразия...*, pp. 134–135.

manifesto he reviewed, that this Russian – “Eurasian” – imperialism will of course be better, fairer, and more equal than those relations created by the center of rule of the “Romano-Germanic” world. “Eurasia is the area of a certain equality and a certain ‘brotherhood’ of nations, having no analogies in the inter-nation relations of colonial empires”. The culture of this community will be “a common creation and common achievement of the Eurasian peoples” – there is no speaking of such a community in the case of relations between the Bantu or Malay and with the English, certainly not...<sup>93</sup>

In summing up his arguments, Savitskii returned to a polemical correction in relation to the idealistic, in his opinion, approach of the fight against Europe proposed in the manifesto of Trubetskoi. One cannot rest this struggle on the renunciation of community “egocentrism” and the lively rebellion of all “humanity”. It is Europe, in the name of its alleged universalism, which tempts and coerces other cultures, through the intermediary of their intelligentsia, to renounce particular “egocentrisms” – that is simply the resignation from the will to defend their own identity. This was also the case in the history of Russia – from the time of Peter the Great, when the intellectual elite of the country fell prostrate before “Europe”, writes Savitskii scathingly. And emphasizes, in the spirit of the geopolitical “realism” of struggle, collective confrontation, organized will and strength: “European egocentrism” should be confronted with “Eurasian egocentrism”. A Eurasian community is emerging around Russia, basically better, fairer, and more equal to that created by “Romano-German” colonialism. But one should not succumb to illusions: if we want to win a war with the predatory West, we must not set against it an amorphous “humanity”, but a well-organized and more powerful imperial community: a Eurasian one.<sup>94</sup>

Trubetskoi and a small group of his ideological comrades from Sofia, did not protest against Savitskii’s political correction. This was the proper beginning of Eurasianism. From that beginning, the problem was also revealed of the attitude of the new, émigré ideology – to Bolshevism: the new and real power in Russia. The summer of 1920 was the moment of a particular enlivening of the discussion around this problem. When the Bolsheviks first appeared as defenders of the “Russian land” before the invasion of the “Polish lords” on Kiev, and then they developed a great offensive to the west, which “through the cadaver of white Poland” was to lead to a new “Red” Russia in the heart of Europe. To this moment – from the point of view of his vision of the great

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<sup>93</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 135–136.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

war with the “Romano-Germanic” world – Trubetskoi also referred. He made remarks about the relationship between the Bolshevik movement and the West in a letter to a friend from Prague, Roman Jakobson, a co-creator of structuralism in linguistics already mentioned here. Trubetskoi wrote this letter from the perspective of the end of the Soviet-Polish war, the already closing negotiations in Riga. He therefore proposed to grasp its whole and to consider the thought that froze the blood in the veins of the Eurasianist, the consequences of the hypothetical success of the Bolshevik storm on Warsaw and the arrival of the Red Army to Berlin. If Lenin managed to implement his plan and Bolshevize Germany – “the axis of the world would immediately move from Moscow to Berlin.” Unlike Savitskii, his better philosophically educated older colleague was fully aware that the ideological basis of Bolshevism – communism – is by no means Russian, but is the result of “Romano-German civilization”. The Germans would build an ideal of the communist state in harmony with these Western sources, in Russia – as a result of its cultural distinctness – this would be unrealizable. After the fall of Poland and Tukhachevskii’s arrival in the center of Germany, Berlin would become the “capital of the all-European, and maybe even the global, Soviet republic.” Trubetskoi had no doubts:

Masters and slaves have always been, they are and will be. They exist in the Soviet system in Russia. In the universal republic, the masters will be Germany, generally speaking – Romano-Germans, and slaves – us, that is everyone else. The degree of slavery will be directly proportional to the “cultural level”, that is, to distance from the Roman-Germanic pattern.<sup>95</sup>

Trubetskoi, resolutely anti-Communist, did not notice any “saviors” of Russia in the Bolsheviks. It is rather the effect of their defeat in the Battle of Warsaw, stopping their march to the west that allows them to play the role of a formation that maintains the separateness, or even the opposition of Russia to the “Romano-Germanic” world. You could say: Poles saved not only Europe from Sovietization, but also (Bolshevik) Russia from surrendering itself again to the yoke of the West.

A relatively marginal group of Russian émigrés looked at this issue totally differently – it is just that they were located on the opposite edge of the shaken Empire: in Manchurian Harbin. There, after the defeat of Admiral Alexander Kolchak in the Far East, a concept of reconciliation with the new rulers of the

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<sup>95</sup> See a N. Trubetskoi’s letter to R. Jakobson dated 7 March 1921, in: *N.S. Trubetzkoy’s letters and notes...*, p. 15.

Kremlin began to form around the former head of his information office, an outstanding representative of the Kadet Party, Nikolai Ustralov. Impressed by Trotskii and Lenin's appeal to the patriotic feelings of the Russians against "Polish interventionists" in May 1920, Ustralov saw in the Bolsheviks above all the healthy spirit of Russian imperialism. Driven by this idea, he developed it together with several of his colleagues (mainly from the nationalist wing of the cadets) in the form of a manifesto of ideological national-Bolshevism. It was published in Prague in 1921, a collective volume entitled *Smena vekh* ("Change of Signposts" a reference to the title of the best-known intellectual commemoration mentioned here, which Struve initiated more than a dozen years earlier). To the delight of the Bolshevik leadership, the *smenovekhovtsi* called for émigrés to return to Soviet Russia. Struve, however, like most of the emigrants, reacted decidedly critically: Bolshevism remained for him a mad, Russia-destroying ideology of internationalism.<sup>96</sup>

Savitskii joined directly into this discussion. As we can already see from his previous writings, he was strongly inclined to an optimistic assessment of Bolshevism as – at least – a kind of tool for saving territorial cohesion and the autonomy of Russia. In November 1921, he decided to oppose his master and teacher up to that point, in this matter. He wrote a letter to Struve in defence of national-Bolshevism. He repeated all his previous arguments. First, the Bolsheviks – unlike their "White" opponents discredited in this respect – proved capable of focusing strength in their own hands and effectively using it. The absolute helplessness and political ineptitude of cadets, Socialist Revolutionaries and other parties supporting the power of Kolchak or Denikin, shows that Russia can only be put in order by the system of Lenin and Trotskii at this time. A real alternative to it is not "old, beautiful Russia", but deadly chaos and foreign intervention. The Bolsheviks are different from their Russian opponents, in what Savitskii, with admiration mixed up with jealousy, calls "the temperament of power". The fact that they lost the war with Poland – what Struve used as proof to accuse them of ineptitude from the national-imperial, Russian point of view – does not change the overall picture. The Soviets have already regained ninety per cent of the territory of the former Empire. Accusing them of contributing to the partition of Russia is thus absurd. The

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<sup>96</sup> See R. Pipes, *Struve. Liberal on the Right...*, pp. 352–356; cf., among others, M. Арыпский, *Идеология национал-большевизма*, Paris, 1980; H. Hardeman, *Coming to Terms with the Soviet Regime. The "Changing Signposts" Movement among Russian Émigrés in the Early 1920s*, DeKalb, 1994.



momentary failure in the war with Poland is only an episode which can soon be replaced by “episodes of a decidedly different character”. Soviet Russia has every chance to finish the work of re-imperializing the space taken over from the fallen Romanov dynasty. Communism only seems to reject nationalism and imperialism. Formally, it also denied militarism – and this did not prevent the construction and effective use of the gigantic Red Army. One must preserve the political apparatus that the Bolsheviks built. It is enough to change their economic system – and Russia will be strong again, great.<sup>97</sup>

The history of Eurasianism was just beginning. In August 1921, a common programmatic manifesto of Trubetskoi, Savitskii, Suvchinskii and Florovskii appeared – a collection of their articles titled *Iskhod k Vostoku. Predchustvia i svershenia. Utverzhdenie evraziitsev* (“Exit to the East. Premonitions and Fulfillment. Confirmation of the Eurasians”). After it, the next ones will come – among others *Na putiakh* (“On the Roads”), *Rossia i latinstvo* (“Russia and Latindom”) and subsequent volumes of *Evraziiskii vremennik*. The movement will develop and disperse. Its creators will continue to promote it in Berlin, Vienna, Prague and Paris. They will gain new, often outstanding supporters – among others, of philosophers Vladimir Iliin and Alexandre Kojève (Alexandr Kozhevnikov), historians George Vernadsky (Georgi Vernadskii) and Lev Karsavin, literary critic Dmitri Sviatopolk-Mirskii, and the publicist Sergei Efron (husband of Marina Tsvetaeva)... The movement was the object of provocation of the Soviet political police (the “Trust” scandal). This helped to speed up the breakdown of its organized forms after 1928, when part of the Eurasianists ultimately came out in favor of the USSR, thus discouraging others from the movement. In 1938, the movement’s inspiration, Nikolai Trubetskoi, died in Vienna. Florovskii died in Princeton in 1979. Suvchinskii lived until 1985 – he died in Paris.

Savitskii set off for Prague in December 1921, where he would settle down to the end of his life (with a “break” in 1945–1956, caused by his arrest by the Soviet counterintelligence “Smersh” after the occupation of Prague by the Red Army and his placement in the Mordovia camp). After returning to Czechoslovakia, he was arrested again in 1961 for publishing (under a pseudonym) in Paris, poems about life in the labor camp. Released after a year, due to the intervention of Western intellectuals – including Bertrand Russell and Isaiah Berlin – he lived until 1968, a memorable year in Czechoslovakia.

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<sup>97</sup> See П.Н. Савицкий, “Письмо к Струве [5 ноября 1921] ‘Еще о национал-большевизме’”, *Элементы. Евразийское обозрение*, 1993, no. 4, pp. 20–21.

He died in April that year. His extremely busy life after 1921, filled with hundreds of articles, lectures, daily duties in Russian cultural institutions functioning in Prague, and above all, developing the spiritual (after deepening his own, Orthodox faith), geographical and economic foundations of the doctrine of Eurasianism – is no longer the subject of our analysis here (like the history of the Eurasian movement on emigration and development of diverse variants of the ideology created in these turbulent times).<sup>98</sup>

We are interested in another question: the birth of the concept of the “Eurasian” empire in the context of the changes that Russia and the whole world of empires of the early twentieth century passed through on the road to the Great War and through its upheavals, including the Bolshevik revolution. The researcher of Savitskii’s vision cited several times previously, Sergei Glebov, summarized the sense of challenge that these experiences had become – and the answers given to them by his protagonist – summarized as an attempt to “think” or imagine an empire anew in the age of nation states and at the same time in the epoch of the crisis of capitalism and parliamentary democracy.<sup>99</sup> This is a good summary, but – like every other – insufficient. The inclusion of the history of an idea presented here, into the broader issue of the genesis and significance of the First World War and the geopolitical digressions that preceded and accompanied it, allows us to try to complete this reflection.

The described period (1895–1921) allows to capture a certain aspect of the dynamics of political, cultural and economic changes that we see today, analyzing the end of the “long nineteenth century” and its stormy transition, through war and revolution, into the “short twentieth century”. At that time, it is not the crisis of capitalism or parliamentary democracy that seems to be the most discernible. The time of the fatal attempt will come for them rather later, in the 1930s, immediately preceding the outbreak of the Second World War: symbolically – starting from the New York stock market crash in 1929 and the first successes of the NSDAP in the elections to the Reichstag in Germany. Of course, the victory of the Bolshevik revolution was a challenge both for parliamentary democracy and for capitalism. However, as we have seen, in 1921,

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<sup>98</sup> And here, the literature, both Russian and Western, is voluminous. Let me, therefore, refer only to the latest review of the subject: *The Politics of Eurasianism. Identity, Popular Culture and Russia’s Foreign Policy*, ed. by M. Bassin, G. Pozo, New York and London, 2017; from the Polish literature see also the study of B. Gołabek, *Lew Gumilow i Aleksander Dugin. O dwóch obliczach eurazjatyizmu w Rosji po 1991 roku*, Kraków, 2012; A. Nowak, *Putin. Źródła imperialnej agresji*, Warszawa, 2014, pp. 61–74, 131–226.

<sup>99</sup> See C. Glebov, “Границы империи и модерна...”, pp. 290–291.

hardly anyone believed in the cementing of a new economic system, alternative to capitalism – this will happen only in the times of the Great Depression and Western fascination with the specific successes of the first two *piatiletkas* (i.e. Five-Year plans, 1928–1932 and 1932–1937) in the USSR. As a result of the First World War, parliamentary democracy certainly did not give way, but immediately after it – it appeared in many areas, where previously traditional or only just modernizing (also in terms of public participation in the exercise of power) empires prevailed. The Great War, or rather, as I tried to present it here, also the last decades preceding it – was the time of crisis of empires.

One of the main reasons for it was the “maturation” of nation-forming processes, or – if you will – the emergence of modern national projects seeking a place for themselves in the world as well as political representation. The significance of this challenge in the Russian Empire in the late nineteenth century went far beyond the boundaries of the previously known “Polish problem”. It revealed its full scale during the revolution of 1905–1907, in the already openly multinational composition of the Duma of the first two terms, thus confirming in practice the findings of the census of 1897. Now the Ukrainian question found itself at the center of the question about the future of the Empire. The young Petr Savitskii from Chernigov was in an exceptionally good place (and time) to notice the importance of this question and this challenge. The essence of the problem – from the point of view of stability and development of the Empire – relied on the fact that the national identity of many *ethne* exceeding half of the population of “Russia”, demonstrated the ability to challenge loyalty to the Empire, to reject its ideological authority. This was not the whole problem, however. The 1905 revolution also showed another dimension of the same issue: the weakness of “imperial patriotism” in the Russian ethnos itself, in its peasant, worker and intellectual social basis. Finally, the humiliating defeat in external confrontation with Japan, and then – in 1908 – in a diplomatic conflict with Austria-Hungary (and the Germans standing behind them) on the annexation of Bosnia – this was the third of the manifestations of the crisis of the Russian Empire already felt before the war. Jointly, these were motives of fear and searching – from the side of its defenders or reformers – political and ideological answers that would help soothe this anxiety, find a cure for it. How to discover the new formula of the Empire, allowing it to survive and develop in the conditions of a new age? How to save the imperial order from the growing forces of chaos?

Although these questions sounded particularly dramatic in Russia in the early twentieth century, it was not a complete exception among other empires.

It was a time of crisis not only for the Romanov Empire but for the imperial order in general. And this is the second aspect which I tried to bring out in the narrative of this text, showing its meaning. It is no coincidence that the very beginning of the twentieth century is the moment when a new concept emerged: geopolitics. And the fact that at the same time as the Swedish geographer, Kjellén, formulates it, an English economist, John Hobson, creates his punishing criticism of the global imperial system. The word “globalization”, used here, accurately reflects the situation that Halford Mackinder presented in his lecture at the Royal Geographical Society in 1904: the whole world is already occupied, gathered up, filled with the influences of great empires. There is no more room for expansion, which until now, especially in the last decades of the nineteenth century, was the most convincing expression of imperial vitality. What will happen next – in a very cramped world? Which empires will have to “move” in this world, “sit lower” in the hierarchy of power and development prospects, since it is impossible to share new influences relatively evenly?

These *fin-de-siècle* moods, combined with the stunning success of Darwinism in the social and political imagination of that time, layered onto the structure of the great inter-imperial game of the early twentieth century. They stimulated a state of nervousness, uncertain expectations of a potentially dangerous change, as well as the desire to face it. Pushed by social anxieties and the cultural ferment, it was not possible to control global change from above or hold it back. The imperial order of that time was not only questioned in Russia and not only by national movements. Hobson and Lenin showed, each in his own way, how difficult it is to put the brakes on the “mechanism” of rivalry embedded in capitalism combined with the imperial division of the world. It is in this situation that ideas appeared that went beyond the reality of the crisis of the current order, which was already losing its stability and authority, already cracking. Marxist gnosis provided one of the scenarios of questioning the old order and building a new one. It demanded domination cloaked in an aura of idealism, the struggle for the rights of the oppressed and the weak, but it also fuelled other visions of transformation that were created at the brink of the Great War.

We have tried to look at the maturing of one of these visions here: how it draws its elements from the tradition of Russia’s political imagination, how it responds to inspirations flowing from concepts created simultaneously in other countries, especially on the still “model-forming” (even if for this reason, attacked and hated) West. From the idea of a liberal empire, inscribed in the renewed order of the modernizing world, through the experience of subsequent

shocks and disappointments resulting from the Great War, to seek a way out of the already unfolding catastrophe – this is the evolution we followed in the example of the vision of the young Petr Savitskii. In fact, it forms part of a wider pattern of this phenomenon, which Eric Voegelin, the researcher of the birth of the first “ecumenical era” (V–II century BC) and the similar problems of the collision of the old imperial order with the new one, called it “a desirable exodus from reality”. This attempt to rediscover the justification for the old empire, for its expansion – at a time when its structures are shaking, and the former ideology that held them together – has lost its power. In view of the triumphant new imperial system coming from outside, which announces its own ideology as universally binding, a new vision of order, as the victorious Western powers in 1918–1919 seemed to do, then projects of great rebellion and its justification arise. Counter-visions of a liberating empire are created, which is to be defeated by the war and through it, metamorphose the old empire. This war-related metamorphosis of the Empire’s vision seems to be the most interesting phenomenon we have tried to analyze here on one example.

Such an effective metamorphosis was carried out by the Bolsheviks. They did not necessarily aspire to it. As a result of the stopping of their revolutionary march to the West in 1920, they became heirs to the geopolitical location of Great Russia. They also made a practical attempt to realize this dream that accompanied Struve and his pupil before the First World War. That is, a successful repetition of this change which he described on the example of British professor Seeley – expanding the English center to the size of “greater Britain”, integrating ethnically foreign peripheries into one imperial community, stable, and at the same time capable of further expansion. Soviet Russia and then the Soviet Union by no means became – contrary to the systematics proposed by Joshua Sanborn of the collapse of old Russia during the war – a post-imperial system. Instead it – as noticed more clearly only at the end of this tragic experiment, on the threshold of the 1990s – created an empire of a new type.

The ideology of Eurasianism, especially in the layer examined here by us that was created by the concept of a geopolitical rematch against the West, was shaped as a specific interpretation of this metamorphosis, through which imperial Russia passes. It could not be, after all, as a result of maintaining the principles of communist (potentially internationalist) doctrine under the rule of Lenin and even Stalin, that was adopted in “Red” Moscow. The decisive, anti-Western vector of Eurasianism, however, renewed its significance and revealed its attractiveness in Russia at the moment when the Soviet neo-imperial model broke up, and in any case its ideological, communist base collapsed.

And when the next phase of globalization again seemed to embrace the world under the slogan of the “end of history” and the victory of one, Western model of life and value system. It then became attractive to combine in the concept, whose origins we followed here, the element of strength with the direction of seeking this strength not in the West, but against the West, based on “our” Asia, on “Eurasia”, on the Heartland, based on which will begin a new reconquista...

The slice of the history of ideas presented here is endless. The ideologies of imperial rematch, the building of a new, “just”, “liberating” empire – against the forces of the “evil” and “false” order dominating in the world – return in our newest “ecumenical era”. And it may be a study of the formative phase of this ideology, a stage related to the Great War of the early twentieth century, that is a task worthy of effort, also at the beginning of the 21st century.