

THE ANATOMY OF A SOCIOCULTURAL CRISIS: CALAMITIES IN PITIRIM A. SOROKIN'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

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ABSTRACT: *Revolutions, wars, and other social upheavals fascinated and intrigued great scholars and thinkers of all times. One of the most remarkable thinkers to study them has been the Russian-American sociologist and philosopher Pitirim Sorokin. In his early works the young scholar considers social upheavals no more than giant nuisances on the path of the humanity's inexorable progress to the social and cultural perfection. However, the ordeal of the World War I (1914-1918), the Russian Revolution (1917), and the Russian Civil War (1917-1923) soon dramatically alters this optimistic outlook.*

What, then, is a possible way to alleviation of the humanity's seemingly endless suffering? After a lengthy and careful analysis, the scholar arrives to the conclusion that the problem is essentially "systemic" in nature, in other words, periods of crisis arrive when a society is misbalanced and un-integrated. This paper follows an extraordinary evolution of the Pitirim Sorokin's views on the subject by analyzing a number of the scholar's milestone works, published over the span of more than 50 years.

KEYWORDS: *Pitirim A. Sorokin, calamities, crisis, philosophy of history*

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“There’s no big apocalypse. Just an endless procession of little ones.”

– Neil Gaiman, *Signal to Noise*.

“Hate begets hate, violence engenders violence, hypocrisy is answered by hypocrisy, war generates war, and love creates love. ... Only the power of unbounded love practiced in regard to all human beings can defeat the forces of interhuman strife, and can prevent the pending extermination of man by man on this planet. Without love, no armament, no war, no diplomatic machinations, no coercive police force, no school education, no economic or political measures, not even hydrogen bombs can prevent the pending catastrophe.”

Pitirim A. Sorokin

Introduction

Revolutions, wars, and other social upheavals fascinated and intrigued great scholars and thinkers of all times. One of the most remarkable thinkers to study them has been the Russian-American sociologist and philosopher Pitirim Sorokin. In his early works the young scholar considers social upheavals no more than giant nuisances on the path of the humanity’s inexorable progress to the social and cultural perfection. However, the ordeal of the World War I (1914–1918), the Russian Revolution (1917), and the Russian Civil War (1917–1923) soon dramatically alters this optimistic outlook.

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1. The Evolution of Pitirim A. Sorokin’s Philosophy of History

Revolutions, wars, and other social upheavals fascinated and intrigued great scholars and thinkers of all times. One of the most remarkable thinkers to study them has been the Russian-American sociologist and philosopher Pitirim Sorokin. During his long and prolific academic career the scholar published about forty books and some five-hundred articles and essays [Johnston, 1999, p. 25; Sorokin 1991, p. VI], and his scholarly legacy continues to attract new followers every day.

Barry V. Johnston, the author of Sorokin’s scholarly biography, notes: “Sorokin was one of sociology’s most stimulating and controversial statesmen. In a six-decade career his works opened new fields and broadened traditional sociological concerns. Sorokin crafted major contributions to the study of social mobility, war and revolution, altruism, social change, rural sociology, the sociology of science and knowledge, and sociological theory.” [Johnston, 1995, p. IX].

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Revolution (1917), and the Russian Civil War (1917–1923) soon dramatically alters this optimistic outlook.

In the process of his continuing quest for the “Holy Grail” of sociocultural universe, the scholar proposes a concept of “cultural supersystem,” the theory of which he brilliantly and richly develops. This concept becomes a centerpiece of the thinker’s philosophy of history. From now on, according to P.A. Sorokin, history is a magnificent, if at times horrifying parade of juggernauts of “cultural supersystems,” eternally replacing each other in the process of sociocultural evolution. According to this highly original and fascinating paradigm, revolutions, wars, and other sociocultural upheavals punctuate history during the periods of change and crisis. Furthermore, they are often interconnected, triggering each other in the prolonged cycles of horrifying human suffering. Having analyzed ideas of some of the greatest philosophers of history of all times, Sorokin arrives to the conclusion that they all share a surprising and significant number of similarities.

What, then, is a possible way to alleviation of the humanity’s seemingly endless suffering? After a lengthy and careful analysis, the scholar arrives to the conclusion that the problem is essentially “systemic” in nature, in other words, periods of crisis arrive when a society is misbalanced and un-integrated. For example, during the last centuries humanity made significant strides in the fields of knowledge (Truth) and arts (Beauty), however, lags in altruistic and creative love (Goodness). As a result, the heavily influenced by the West human civilization is presently in great peril.

Of course, P.A. Sorokin is not alone within the Russian philosophical tradition in his critique of the Western sensate civilization. Much of this line of thought takes root in Slavophilia – an intellectual movement originating from 19th century that wanted the Russian society to develop upon values and institutions derived from its early history. In the mid-19th century, Russia is beginning to absorb the ideas and culture of Western Europe at an accelerated pace which promptly creates an unstable sociocultural and socioeconomic climate. There is a tremendous growth in revolutionary activity accompanying a general restructuring of tsardom where liberal reforms, enacted by an unwieldy autocracy, induces a sense of tension in both politics and civil society. That is why Slavophiles vigorously oppose dissemination of the Western values and institutions in Russia.

Some of the founders of the Slavophiles movement are *littérateur* Ivan S. Aksakov (1823–1886), his brother, critic and writer Konstantin S. Aksakov (1817–1860), religious poet Aleksey S. Khomyakov (1804–1860), literary critic and philosopher Ivan V. Kireyevsky (1806–1856), historian and journalist Mikhail P. Pogodin (1800–1875), one of the architects of the Emancipation reform of 1861 Yuri Samarin (1819–1876), great Romantic poet Fyodor I. Tyutchev (1803–1873), and poet Nikolay M. Yazykov (1803–1846).

Among prominent Russian thinkers influenced by Slavophiles ideology are, for example, naturalist, ethnologist, philosopher, and historian Nikolay Ya. Danilevsky (1822–1885), author and philosopher Konstantin N. Leontyev (1831–1891), writer and philosopher Fyodor M. Dostoyevsky (1821–1881), writer and philosopher Leo N.

Tolstoy, as well as 20th century novelist and historian Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008).

Nikolay Ya. Danilevsky publishes his classic book “Russia and Europe,” initially as a series of journal articles, in 1869. The thinker suggests that history is not a linear development of events and ideas, and divides all peoples, past and present, into three main classes: 1) the positive agents of history, i.e. the peoples who created great civilizations or “historico-cultural types”; 2) the negative agents of history, i.e. the peoples and tribes who did not create great civilizations, but as “whips of God” delivered the *coup de grace* to the dying civilizations; and 3) the ethnographic material, i.e. the peoples and tribes whose creative elan was for some reason arrested at an early stage of their development. Only comparatively few peoples or tribes are able to create great civilizations, says Danilevsky. In the fourth chapter of his book the thinker lists ten “historico-cultural types,” such as Chaldean, Hebrew, Arabic, Indian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Germanic, Egyptian, and Chinese (which includes Japanese culture). To these the thinker also adds Mexican and Peruvian types, as well as the future Slavic type (“new Slavic civilization”).

Philosopher, publicist and literary critic Nikolay N. Strakhov (1828–1896) calls the book “the catechism” and “the code” of Slavophilia. While consistently promulgating slavophilian ideas about the primordial originality of Russia, Danilevsky not only elevates it onto the level of absolute exclusivity, but puts forward a requirement of a peculiar isolationism. Russia, in his view, is not only different from Europe, but it is completely alien to the German-Roman world which finds itself in the state of a deep crisis.

Often called the “Russian Nietzsche,” Konstantin N. Leontyev is a fierce critique of the West. Almost simultaneously with Danilevsky, he creates an original theory of civilizations, based on their cyclicity and multi-linear evolution. After offering a comparative analysis of life-careers of various biological and sociocultural phenomena, the thinker proposes the “law of cyclicity of historical development” according to which every historically significant human community proceeds through three stages: 1) initial simplicity; 2) flourishing complexity; 3) secondary simplicity. The average longevity of “states” is being suggested by the thinker to be 1000-1200 years long. Leontyev notes, that “cultures” and “civilizations” generally survive “states” to which they belong “by a long time,” as well as precedes Spengler in the definition of civilization as a sophisticated, however ossified, “dead” stage of a culture development.

The thinker expresses apprehensive views toward emanating from the West scientific and technical progress, which is capable to destroy the environment as well as cause other catastrophes and calamities. The thinker grimly and prophetically comments on calamitous and dangerous consequences of a fast-paced sociocultural experimentation: “On the pink water and sugar such fundamental upheavals are not prepared: they are offered to the humankind always by the way of iron, fire, blood, and weeping.” Those fears, as the 20 century experience clearly illustrates, proved to be far from unfounded.

Another prominent thinker who criticizes the West is Fyodor M. Dostoyevsky. His literary works explore human psychology in the troubled political, social, and spiritual atmosphere of 19th-century Russia, and engage with a variety of philosophical and religious themes. The thinker sees in the phenomenon of Western capitalism a specter of coming disintegration of society as a result of loss of its main basis – union of individuals for the advantage of everyone and of all.

If Dostoyevsky's works analyze rapid changes during the initial stages of capitalism through the eyes of lower- and middle-class city dwellers, Leo N. Tolstoy shows us the same processes from the point of view of land-owners and peasants. The thinker creates his own religious and ethical school of thought about the world, humanity, purpose of life, and the needed reorganization of society – the Tolstoyan movement.

One of the most outspoken critics of the West in the 20 century is Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn. In his commencement address at Harvard University in 1978, he proclaims that despite impressive technological and material achievements, the Western society is spiritually weak and mired in vulgar materialism. The thinker proceeds to explain the underlying reasons:

“This means that the mistake must be at the root, at the very basis of human thinking in the past centuries. I refer to the prevailing Western view of the world which was first born during the Renaissance and found its political expression from the period of the Enlightenment. It became the basis for government and social science and could be defined as rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed and enforced autonomy of man from any higher force above him. It could also be called anthropocentricity, with man seen as the center of everything that exists.... The West ended up by truly enforcing human rights, sometimes even excessively, but man's sense of responsibility to God and society grew dimmer and dimmer. In the past decades, the legalistically selfish aspect of Western approach and thinking has reached its final dimension and the world wound up in a harsh spiritual crisis and a political impasse. All the glorified technological achievements of Progress, including the conquest of outer space, do not redeem the 20th century's moral poverty which no one could imagine even as late as in the 19th Century.”

What, then, distinguishes Sorokin from the Slavophiles and representatives of other similar schools of thought? First of all, P.A. Sorokin thinks and operates within a scientific paradigm of what he himself calls integralistic philosophy. As will be shown below, Sorokin devises and thoroughly substantiates a theory of the integrated sociocultural systems as very different from un-integrated entities. At the basis of this theoretical construct are the principle of immanent changes and the principle of limits. Based on this thoroughly developed paradigm, Sorokin objectively addresses deficiencies and flaws of not only overripe sensate stage of the Western civilization, but of any decaying sociocultural system – sensate, ideational, idealistic, or any integrated synthesis of thereof.

And so, returning now to the subject of calamities and upheavals. The thinker finds the key to these eternal problems on a higher plane of human thought and endeavor by proposing a number of highly controversial and seemingly paradoxical, yet in essence eternal and universal concepts.

One of those fundamental concepts is Triadological theory the main scientific foundation of which is eternal existence of three synchronous types of all-encompassing sociocultural organization (thus, which exist in Triunity), and which are essentially dynamic (self-evolving *from within*) and cyclical – i.e. interchanging each other, by turn, in their predominance over the other two types. Konstantin Khroutski proposes to denote these Types (in abbreviation) as T_SCSS – Types of SocioCultural SuperSystems [Khroutski, 2015]. Another Sorokin's gift to all of us is his fundamental concept of creative altruism that seems to promise a better future for the rapidly globalizing humanity.

This paper follows an extraordinary evolution of Pitirim Sorokin's views on the subject by analyzing a number of the scholar's milestone works, published over the span of more than 50 years, such as "Crime and Punishment" (1914), "System of Sociology" (1920), "Hunger as a Factor" (1922), "Sociology of Revolution" (1925), "Contemporary Sociological Theories," "Social and Cultural Dynamics" (1937), "Man and Society in Calamity" (1942), "Society, Culture, Personality. Their Structure and Dynamics: A System of General Sociology" (1947), "The Ways and Power of Love" (1954), "Integralism – My Philosophy" (1957), "Modern Historical and Social Philosophies" (1963), and "Sociological Theories of Today" (1966). In those seminal works the scholar introduces a sophisticated analytical apparatus into the sociocultural theory and research, achieving a more systemic understanding of a number of highly complex phenomena. In general, Sorokin's notion "sociocultural" directly points to the organic unity of all the social and cultural phenomena and processes (and of the corresponding Type of their rational knowledge) into the whole (one of the Three, of actual existence) type of a supersystem – Sensate, Ideational, or Integral.

To help analyze the evolution of Pitirim Sorokin's analysis of calamities, the evolution of his philosophy of history could be divided into six periods: 1) Christian-Ideational; 2) Positivistic-Behaviorist; 3) Transitional; 4) Integralistic; 5) Altruistic, and 6) Generalizing.

2. Christian-Ideational Period (1889–1905)

The first period in the development of the world-view of the young Pitirim (before 1905 and after living his childhood years among the native Komi people of northern Russia) could be called Christian-Ideational. The *Weltanschauung* of the future scholar represents a synthesis of the teleological philosophy of Christianity with pre-Christian beliefs of the Komi people. Sorokin would later observe, that "the moral precepts of Christianity, especially the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes, decisively conditioned my moral values not only in youth but for the rest of my life." [Sorokin, 1998, p. 3].

The way of thinking of the young Pitirim is described in detail in the Sorokin's autobiographical works.² He writes:

The morality and mores of the Komi communities were rooted in the precepts of the Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, and mutual aid. These moral principles were regarded as God-given, unconditionally binding upon all. As such they were not only preached but widely practiced. The same applied to the common law of peasants. The norms of this law were not so much recorded in the court-books as they were in the hearts and actions of my neighbors. They were obeyed not through fear of punishment but as deeply internalized “categorical imperatives. [Sorokin, 1963, p. 14]

3. Positivistic Period (1905-1920s)

During the second, positivistic period (approximately from 1905 to 1920) P.A. Sorokin undergoes through disintegration of his Christian-Ideational thinking and, subsequently, constructs a new, mainly positivistic and behaviouristic paradigm. The scholar vividly describes results of various formational influences on him as a young seminarist during those politically charged times in the pre-revolutionary Russia:

The combined effect of all these forces was so powerful that within two years after my enrollment at the school most of my previous religious, philosophical, political, economic, and social ideologies had collapsed. My previous religiosity was supplanted by a semi-atheistic rejection of the theologies and rituals of the Russian Orthodox Church. Compulsory attendance at Church services, imposed by the school, notably stimulated this revolt. My previous *Weltanschauung* and values were replaced by “scientific theories of evolution” and “natural science philosophy.” My former acceptance of the Czarist monarchical regime and its “capitalist” economy was replaced by republican, democratic, and socialist views. Previous political indifference gave way to revolutionary zeal. [Sorokin, 1963, pp. 43-44]

Later, during the years of study in the Psychoneurological Institute and the Saint-Petersburg University, Pitirim adds to his earlier education a substantial knowledge of philosophy, psychology, ethics, history, and natural sciences, as well as, importantly, sociology and law. He notes:

Along with the enrichment of my knowledge in these disciplines, I continued the work of integrating this knowledge into a unified, more or less consistent system or *Weltanschauung*. Philosophically the emerging system was a variety of empirical neopositivism or critical realism based upon logical and empirical scientific methods. Sociologically it represented a sort of synthesis of the Compeian-Spencerian sociology of evolution-

² See Russian diary, 1917–1922. – L. – 310 p. 1925; Leaves from a Russian Diary. – N.Y. – 310 p. 1927; Leaves from a Russian Diary and Thirty Years after. – Boston. – 346 p. 1950; A Long Journey: The Autobiography of Pitirim Sorokin. – New Haven. – 327 p. 1963.

progress corrected and supplemented by the theories of N. Mikhailovsky, P. Lavrov, E. de Roberty, L. Petrajitzky, M. Kovalevsky, M. Rostovtzeff, P. Kropotkin, among the Russian social thinkers, and by the theories of G. Tarde, E. Durkheim, G. Simmel, M. Weber, R. Stammler, K. Marx, V. Pareto and other western social scientists. Politically, it was a form of socialistic ideology, founded upon the ethics of solidarity, mutual aid, and freedom. All in all, it was an optimistic *Weltanschauung* fairly similar to the prevalent “world-view” of a majority of the Russian and Western thinkers of the pre-catastrophic decade of the twentieth century. [Sorokin, 1963, pp. 75-76]

Sorokin’s creative output during this period starts with his first publications in 1910. He creates such works as “Crime and Punishment: Service and Reward: A Sociological Etude about the Main Forms of Social Behavior and Morals,” (1914), “Suicide as a Social Phenomenon (1913), “Subject and Boundaries of Sociology” (1913), “L.N. Tolstoy as a Philosopher” (1915), and “System of Sociology,” as well as a large number of political and analytical publications, which represent a prescient, and in many ways scientific chronicle of the Russian Revolution.

His master’s dissertation, which is published in 1914 as the monograph “Crime and Punishment: Sociological Etude about the Main Forms of Social Behavior and Morality” becomes his programmatic work of this period. As well as a number of other works of this period, it represents a creative synthesis of neo-positivism and behaviorism. In based on his master’s thesis 493-pages monograph “Crime and Punishment: Service and Reward” (1914) the young scholar not only presents his philosophical and legal considerations on the society’s evolution, but espouses his contemporary world-view.³ N.F. Zyuzev notes:

The author depicts a large-scale, full of historic details picture of appearance and development of morals, while narrating his own theory of society and the laws of its functioning. All this rests on a solid methodological foundation. In essence, this is first – and at once very serious – experience of creating not only sociological, but also a philosophical theory of society. [Zyuzev, 2004, p. 44]

According to the young scholar, revolutions, trying to establish new ideals by violent methods, play a reactionary role. The alternative to violent legal methods P.A. Sorokin sees in the ideal of the law based on sociable and benevolent behavior. Its essence consists in mutual solidarity and love of people to each other, and in a gradual rapprochement to this ideal P.A. Sorokin sees the future of mankind. He finishes his “politico-legal” utopia with the following words:

Superhuman, who stands above the contemporary good and evil, law and morals, who does not know the imposed from outside “duty,” and is full of

³ The book appears in 1913, when Sorokin was just 24 years old. On the books cover, however, it is marked by the year 1914.

effective love to the fellow humans, this is the limit, to which leads the humanity's history. Such is the conclusion of this work, and such are perspectives, which open before us from the point of view of the developed above propositions. [Sorokin, 1914, p. 493]

Perhaps, no other utopia disintegrated so rapidly, as this one. A few months after the release of "Crime and Punishment" the World War I erupted which put a bloody end to optimistic theories of progress, utopias of eternal peace, as well as to naïve and sentimental believes into humans who are supposedly kind by nature.

4. Transitional Period (1922–1929)

The third, Transitional period (1922–1929) is characterized by inclusion of the new, integralistic themes into the previous paradigm. Sorokin shares with us:

Before continuing with my life story, perhaps at this point it is advisable to say a few words about a new crisis in, and reintegration of my philosophical and psycho-sociological views and value system. Already World War I had made some fissures in the positivistic, "scientific," and humanistic *Weltanschauung* I had held before the War. The Revolution of 1917 enormously enlarged these fissures and eventually shattered this world-outlook with its positivistic philosophy and sociology, its utilitarian system of values, and its conception of historical process as a progressive evolution toward an ever better man, society, and culture. Instead of increasingly enlightened, morally ennobled, aesthetically refined, and creatively developed humanity, these events unleashed in man "the worst of the beasts" and displayed on the historical stage – side by side with the noble, wise, and creative minority – a gigantic world of irrational human animals blindly murdering each other, indiscriminately destroying the great values, overthrowing the immortal achievements of genius, and glorifying vulgarity in its worst form. This unexpected world-wide explosion of the forces of death, bestiality, and ignorance in the supposedly civilized humanity of the twentieth century categorically contradicted all "sweet" theories of progressive evolution of man from ignorance to science and wisdom, from bestiality to noble morality, from barbarism to civilization, from the "theological" to the "positive" stage, from tyranny to freedom, from poverty and disease to unlimited prosperity and health, from ugliness to ever finer beauty, from the man-beast to the superman-god.

This decisive contradiction forced me, as it did many others, to sternly re-examine my pre-war *Weltanschauung*. My personal experiences during the years 1914-22 powerfully reinforced the need for this re-examination. During these years I experienced and observed much too much of hate, hypocrisy, blindness, bestiality, and mass-murder to leave my "cheerful" views intact. It was these historical and "existential" conditions which started the weighing of my values and the reconstruction of my views and of my very self. This reconstruction took place slowly during five years in Communist Russia and then, after my banishment, in Europe and the United States. By the end of the 1920's this painfully blissful process was matured

in its essential features. It resulted in what I now call the *integral system* of philosophy, sociology, psychology, ethics, and values. Some indications of it are already noticeable in my Russian *Sistema Soziologii* and in the works published in Czechoslovakia. They are more evident in my volumes published in America during the years 1924-29. In their mature form the basic principles of Integralism are systematically stated in my volumes published during the last three decades. [Sorokin, 1963, pp. 204-205]

During this period the scholar deeply analyses a number of perennial problems of humanity in such works as “System of Sociology” (1920), “Popular Textbook of Sociology” (1920), “Hunger as a Factor” (1922) and “Sociology of Revolution” (1925). At the same time P.A. Sorokin is continuing to develop his theory of “social stratification” and “social mobility,” which will eventually find its most complete elaboration in the monograph “Social and Cultural Mobility” (1927). Towards the end of this period, in search of solutions for increasingly globalizing problems of humanity, he turns to a kind of “inventory” of existing at the time sociocultural theories in his monograph “Contemporary Sociological Theories” (1928). Again, just like in his previous work “System of Sociology,” the scholar arrives to the conclusion that only a combination of methods, some kind of integral approach will be an effective path to solve the problems of the rapidly globalizing humanity.

In 1920 the scholar publishes two volumes of the monograph “System of Sociology.”⁴ According to his own confession, the monograph represents the foundational stone of all his subsequent sociocultural theories. Sorokin notes:

Some forty-four years have now elapsed since the publication of my *System of Sociology*. Unless there is an urgent need for it, I rarely reread my books after they are published. During these forty-four years, while writing my volumes: *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1937-41); *Social Mobility* (1927); *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (1928); and *Society, Culture and Personality* (1947), I had to reread various parts of these volumes. As a result of these rereading I find that, despite several defects, the volumes gave what appears to me the first logically systematic and empirically detailed theory of social structures: “The Structure of the Elementary Social Systems,” developed in Volume I, and “The Structure of the Complex (Multibonded) Social Systems,” expounded in Volume II.

If in these later works I virtually reiterated in concise form the theory developed in my *Sistema Soziologii*, the reason for such repetition was that I found my early theory more logically consistent, more empirically valid, and more scientifically adequate than any other theory of the social

⁴ P.A. Sorokin planned to publish ten volumes of “System of Sociology.” Because of many reasons, including his expulsion from Soviet Russia in 1922, this plan remained on the “drawing board.” However, main ideas of the unpublished third volume of the “System” were presented in the “Popular Textbook of Sociology” (1920). It also needs to be said that in a certain sense the scholar continued work on his “system of sociology” throughout his life. Having been reflected in many of his subsequent works, it eventually included many aspects of his scientific analysis of the sociocultural universe.

structure in the world literature of sociology and social sciences. [Sorokin, 1963, *A Long Journey*, p. 96]

The beginning of the pluralistic understanding of the structure and evolution of the sociocultural universe has been made and the scholar with his characteristic directness notes: “It is time to stop considering complicated historical processes as an equation with one unknown. Of course, such simplification makes the work of the analysis of social phenomena exceedingly easy. However, not every simplicity is holy. Sometimes simplicity may be different. To put it more precisely and softly – such simplification is wrong and untrue.” [Sorokin, 1963, *A Long Journey*, p. 96].

In 1922 the monograph “Hunger as a Factor” sees the light of day. It represents, in the author’s words: “the analysis of social role of nutrition in general, and hunger, in particular.” In the book P.A. Sorokin undertakes a profound and extremely bold philosophical and historical analysis of the phenomenon of hunger based on the extensive amount of historical material from various eras of many societies.

The immediate motivation to write it was the famine of the years 1921-1922 in Russia which, according to some sources, claimed from three to five millions lives. These circumstances encourage Sorokin to unfold a separate chapter of “System of Sociology” into a separate volume. (Then, in turn, the last chapter of “Hunger as a Factor” turns into a separate large volume “Sociology of Revolution”).

The scholar himself testifies: “This monograph emerges from one chapter of the third volume of my *System of Sociology*. Both the theoretical and the practical importance of the problem of nutrition as a factor caused the development of a single chapter into a whole volume.” [Sorokin, 1975, p. XXXVII]. The book is written based on the results of the developed in collaboration with I.P. Pavlov and V.M. Bekhterev research and observations during the winter of 1921 in the starving areas of the Saratov and the Samara regions.

Predating many of his later revelations, the scholar sternly warns that social upheavals do not forebode well for imperfectly integrated society in crisis: “That which many people think is unusual and absolutely new has occurred before many, many times. Only the actors, the stage settings, the costumes, the places, and the times are different; but the play itself is very old, repeated time after time in the history of mankind. History presents very old things and ideas in new dresses, it is like an old writer, who has exhausted his creative ability and therefore repeats himself.” [Sorokin, 1975, pp. 318-319].

Since P.A. Sorokin is a witness, a participant, and, in many ways a victim of the revolutionary events in Russia, it comes as no surprise that his views on the revolutionary theory appear in many of his works. One of the most remarkable works on the subject is his monograph “Sociology of Revolution” (1923). The scholar writes it and publishes in the Russian in Czechoslovakia in 1923, and then republishes it in the English in the US in 1925. In the book he presents and develops on the basis of an extensive historic background the first scientific theory of revolution.

Sorokin, for example, identifies the typical phases of major revolutions, distinguishing essentially three “inseparable” stages. He calls the first period the

phase of revolutionary upsurge, the second – revolutionary dictatorship, and the third one – reaction.⁵ According to the scholar, the first stages usually involve disintegration of existing legal, moral, religious, and other “reflexes,” while the last one – their reconstruction on a new basis. [Sorokin, 2008, p. 30, 155]. He writes:

In the full development of their life-cycle all great revolutions seem to pass through three typical phases. The first phase is usually of short duration. It is marked by the joys of liberation from the tyranny of the old regime and by great expectations of the reforms promised by all revolutions. This initial stage is radiant, its government humanitarian and benign, its policies mild, vacillating, and fairly impotent. “The worst of the beasts” in man begins to awaken. This short overture is ordinarily succeeded by the second, destructive phase. The great revolution now turns into a furious tornado indiscriminately destroying everything in its path. It pitilessly uproots not only the obsolescent institutions but also the vigorous ones which it destroys along with the dead or moribund values; it murders not only the uncreative power elite of the old regime but also a multitude of creative persons and groups. The revolutionary government at this stage is ruthless, tyrannical, and bloodthirsty. Its policies are mainly destructive, coercive, and terroristic. If the tornado phase does not utterly ruin the nation, its revolution eventually enters the third, constructive phase. With the destruction of all counter-revolutionary forces, it now begins to build a new social, cultural, and personal order. This order is constructed not only of new, revolutionary ideals but includes the restoration of the more vital of the pre-revolutionary institutions, values, and ways of life which had been temporarily destroyed by the second phase of revolution and which revive and reassert themselves regardless of the wishes of the revolutionary government. The post-revolutionary order, therefore, usually represents a blending of the new patterns and way of life with old but vital and creative patterns of pre-revolutionary times. [Sorokin, 1963, pp. 105-106]

According to Sorokin, revolution leads to the destructive consequences for the involved in it society – collapse of its legal and moral supports, cruelty and aggression, unseen previously levels of crime, disintegration of family values, mass immigration, mass murder of people as a result of various acts of violence, hunger, epidemics and suicides. The alternative to the destructive revolutionary chaos the scholar sees in gradual reforms. He grimly warns:

If famine, war and despotism lead to revolution, and revolution lead to still greater famine, war, despotism, do we not face a tragic historical circuit from which no outlet can be found? How shall we unravel the question? Exceedingly simply and for all deep-rooted revolutions in a very

⁵ This pattern then becomes a model for the classic four-stage schema of Crane Brinton. More on evolution of revolutionary theory see Alalykin-Izvekov, Vladimir N., Satkiewicz, Stephen. (2014). From Brinton to Goldstone: A Scientific Civilizational Perspective on the Theory of Revolution. *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 71, Fall, 67–89.

stereotyped, uniform manner. The question is not unraveled. It is solved at one stroke. Death solves it. This outlet never betrays and is always at the disposal of man. A society which has not known how to live, which has been incapable of carrying through adequate reforms, but has thrown itself into the arms of revolution – has to pay the penalty for its sins by the death of a considerable proportion of its members; it has to pay the contribution demanded by that all-powerful Sovereign. [Sorokin, 1967, p. 412]

The Sorokin's concept of revolution in this sense is organically woven into his philosophy of history. Researchers therefore note that on the example of development of the Sorokin's theory of revolution one may be able to trace the evolution of his scholarly world-view. [Lomonosova, 2006, p.162].

In 1928 the 783-pages monograph under the title “Contemporary Sociological Theories” sees the light of day. A well-known American sociologist Robert K. Merton notes:

The fact is, and this is widely recognized by American sociologists, I believe, that no other book has fully superseded Sorokin's.... There have been a dozen or more histories of social thought since Sorokin's magisterial volume. But for the period covered by Sorokin's work, none of these contains the same remarkably comprehensive details about the writings of sociologists and social thinkers. [Sorokin, 1956, p. 783]

The book represents a review of the principal types of social theories of the end of the 19th- beginning of the 20th century with the goal to establish to what extent they are scientifically valid. The theories of the surveyed period are divided into a certain amount of the main schools of thought. In turn, those are divided into their varieties and each variety is represented by a number of the most typical works. At the beginning of each school, or its variety, a short paragraph about its predecessors is given to connect the present sociology with its past. A characterization of the principles of the school or theory is followed by a critical paragraph to show its fallacies or shortcomings.

As it is obvious, in search of solutions to the problems of his time, the scholar turns to a kind of “inventory” of existing sociocultural theories. As in his earlier work “System of Sociology” the scholar arrives to the conclusion that only a combination of scientifically valid methods, some integral approach will be an effective way of addressing the problems of the rapidly globalizing humanity.

5. Integralistic Period (1929–1950s)

The fourth, Integralistic period (1929–1950s) is characterized by radical revision of the views of the scientist. He begins to consider the evolution of society, culture and personality as inseparably linked. The result is creation of the integralistic world view and, as a part of it, of the integralistic philosophy of history.

This period (30–50s of the 20th century) represents the peak of the scholar's scientific creativity. Such classic works as “Social and Cultural Dynamics,” “Society,

Culture, and Personality,” “Man and Society in Calamity,” and many others bring him a long-deserved world fame.

5.1. “Social and Cultural Dynamics” – a breakthrough of Triadologic scholarly approach in the world science development

The results of the scientist’s 10-year long *tour de force* effort to explain the “governing dynamics” of sociocultural universe became known as the four-volume *opus magnum* “Social and Cultural Dynamics” (1937–1941).

The scientist solemnly deliberates his experiences in the Preface of this monumental achievement: “This work has grown out of my efforts to understand something of what has been happening in the social and cultural world about me. I am not ashamed to confess that the World War and most of what took place after it were bewildering to one who, in conformity with the dominant currents of social thought of the earlier twentieth century, had believed in progress, revolution, socialism, democracy, scientific positivism, and many other “isms” of the same sort. For good or ill, I fought for these values and paid the penalty. I expected the progress of peace but not of war; the bloodless reconstruction of society but not bloody revolutions; humanitarianism in nobler disguise but not mass murders; an even finer form of democracy but not autocratic dictatorships; the advance of science but not of propaganda and authoritarian *dicta* in lieu of truth; the many-sided improvement of man but not his relapse into barbarism. The war was the first blow to these conceptions. The grim realities of the Russian Revolution provided the second. If anybody had seriously predicted in 1913 a small fraction of what has actually taken place since, he would have been branded then as mad. And yet what then appeared to be absolutely impossible has indeed happened. [Sorokin, 1937, p. IX]

Sorokin continues on the evolution of his concept: “All this naturally gave rise to insistent questioning. What were the reasons, the causes, and the meaning of these surprises? The leading principles of the social science that I had learned did not help much in my attempt to understand. Quietly, sincerely, only for myself, I began to meditate, to study, and to look for the answer. This personal quest has continued for a number of years. For a long time I was groping in darkness. Various hypotheses were tried and found inadequate. After many trials and errors the central idea of this work emerged. Step by step it developed and crystallized. After preliminary tests of its truth, I undertook its systematic elaboration ... The result is the present group of volumes.” [Sorokin, 1937, p. IX]

While laboring on his monumental task, the scientist has discovered, that the “unchartered territory” where the quest for the “ultimate truth” has taken him, had been a “playground of other giants,” and, willingly or not, found himself in the illustrious company of “philosophers of history.” He contemplates the field of expertise which he was cultivating: “Of the semi-historical disciplines which it resembles, it is nearest to what often is styled Philosophy of History. Since almost all great sociological systems are a brand of philosophy of history, and since most of the great philosophies of history are a sort of sociology of cultural change, I do not have

any objection to the use of this name by anyone who fancies it to describe the present work.” [Sorokin, 1937, p. X]

Once having realized, that his own “philosophy of history” is but one of macrotheories attempting to explain the evolution of sociocultural universe from various perspectives and angles, Sorokin never tired to analyze his predecessors and contemporaries scholarly and creative achievements, as well as in the attempts to reconcile his concepts with other theories of large sociocultural entities and systems. Some of the most influential, and comparable in scale to the Sorokin’s, works in the field of “philosophy of history” at the time have been the treaties on origin and evolution of civilizations by Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, and Arnold Toynbee. Yet, initially, Sorokin finds their concepts of civilization vague, un-systemic, and, therefore, “unscientific.” In fact, the subject “civilization” in “Dynamics” cannot even be found in the monograph’s Index and, instead, the reader is referred to “culture.” [Sorokin, 1937, p. 713]. In its stead, the scholar proposes a concept of “cultural supersystem,” the theory of which he brilliantly and richly develops. Michele Richard reminds us the main precepts of the theory in his Introduction to “Dynamics” as follows.

Sorokin’s data on Graeco-Roman and Western civilization exhibit a pattern of current fluctuation between what he calls “sensate” and “ideational” value-systems. During a sensate period all aspects of life are dominated by a materialistic world view, and economic and scientific activities flourish, particularly during the “active” sensate phase. During the “passive” phase hedonistic values prevail, and in the final “cynical” stage the sensate mentality negates everything including itself. Ideational periods, in contrast, are spiritually oriented, and social relationships are familistic rather than contractual. Ideational periods move from the “ascetic” to the “active” (expansionistic) mentality, but finally degenerate into “fideism” (a desperate will to believe).

When civilization shifts from one of these “supersystems” to the other, there is a stormy period of transition marked by increases in the intensity and magnitude of wars and revolutions, and by general social disorganization (increasing rates of crime and mental illness, breakdown in family structure, etc.). Sorokin’s “law of polarization” states that during such periods violence and egoistic behavior increase, but there is a counterbalancing increase in altruistic behavior (love, self-sacrifice, and mutual aid). At the same time, government becomes increasingly coercive during these periods. Sometimes, however, there is a harmonious combination of the best elements of the two supersystems; a blend of faith, reason, and empiricism. These “idealistic” periods seem to be of shorter duration than the other two supersystems, but in any case the time frame is variable for all three. History does not repeat itself in detail (as Nietzsche suggested) but only in its general conformations.

But what causes these shifts to take place? Sorokin invokes two principles to account for change. The first is the principle of “immanent determinism”; a sociocultural system, like a biological system, unfolds according to its inherent

potentialities. The latter (“immanent determinism” and the inherent potentialities of a sociocultural system) can be understood and explained exclusively from the position of Aristotle’s teleological physics (Organicist cosmology – Functionalist naturalism). However, currently (at modern time) Aristotle’s scientific Organicism is taboo (forbidden in the modern scholarly community. Essentially, this is now the main task of the Biocosmological Association (BCA) – to contribute to the reinstatement of Aristotle’s Organicist science foundations and conceptual framework, thus rehabilitating the teleological physics of Stagirite and developing ourselves for effective meeting and successful resolution of the sociocultural challenges of our 21st century.

Sorokin writes:

External factors can only serve to accelerate or retard the system’s growth, but they cannot alter the nature of the system itself ... The second is the “principle of limits,” which states that the number of basic cultural forms is small, and that growth cannot continue indefinitely in one direction. Both the sensate and the ideational principles are one-sided and incomplete; the more exclusive and dominant one principle becomes, the more limited it becomes. Finally, it exhausts its creativity and begins to wane, permitting its complementary opposite to ascend once more.” [Sorokin, 1991, pp. VIII-XI]

Such, according to Sorokin, is the true solution to the problem of “philosophy of history,” which, in the scholar’s mind, is a magnificent, if at times horrifying parade of juggernauts of “sociocultural supersystems,” eternally replacing each other in the process of sociocultural evolution. Elsewhere, we elaborate on the Sorokin’s approach in much detail, as well as visualize it in a number of conceptual models [Alalykin-Izvekov, 2009].

The title itself of the Pitirim Sorokin’s *magnum opus* – “Social and Cultural Dynamics” – clearly points to the Sociocultural (i.e. covering all human conscious task-oriented activities, phenomena and processes) and Dynamics (originally, Aristotle’s *dunamis*, i.e. inherent potentials), thus basically referring to the all-encompassing self-development of sociocultural systems and supersystems (basing his efforts on the comparative analysis of various “cultures”, that is the synonym of “civilization”, and the study of their, as types, inherent cyclic growth and hierarchical mapping). Essentially, due to Sorokin, all cultures (civilizations), besides their cultural and historical uniqueness – they all have the general (the universal – atemporal and ahistorical) cycles – of the Three interrelated (but self-dependent) Types of sociocultural supersystems (T_SCSS): two radically diverse T_SCSS; and the third intermediate – Integral T_SCSS.

Still, however, Pitirim Sorokin’s Triadological approach is out of a due concern. The reason is evident, we call it in BCA as the current ‘cosmological insufficiency’ (the lack of due foundations for science). Therefore, BCA earnestly tackles this task. However, the given study strives to shed light on the historical aspects of the issue of

“calamities” in P.A. Sorokin’s works, and which is beyond the significant exploration of Sorokin’s foundational Triadological approach.

5.2. Other Sorokin’s works of Integralistic period

In the midst of World War II the scholar returns to the themes of crisis and disasters in his classic 319-pages monograph “Man and Society in Calamity” (1942), however this time within the framework of his on his new integralistic paradigm. He writes:

Among the manifold and diverse calamities that have befallen mankind, four have probably proved the most frequent, most destructive, most terrible, and at the same time, most instructive and significant – namely, war and revolution, famine, and pestilence. These four monsters are the subject of this investigation, in so far as they affect our minds and behavior, our social organization, and our cultural life.” [Sorokin, 1968, p. 13]

The key to the solution of the perennial problems of calamities the scholars sees in a well-integrated in a scientific, religious, moral, and social and other aspects society. Characteristically, he concludes regarding the phenomenon of famine:

“The practical lesson of history is this: the orderly ways of an integral society are always more successful and less costly in dealing with famine than are the various disorderly modes resulting in huge mortality. If the starving society is wise, if its governing and well-to-do classes are unselfish, it will always seek a combination of the rational and less painful ways out of the famine, never would it turn to revolutions, war, and other similar “medicines” which cure the sickness by killing the patient. Unfortunately, many a society does not possess this wisdom of temporary sacrifice. They turn to pseudo-measures and pay the terrible penalty for their foolishness and egotism, their lack of sociality and mutual help. [Sorokin, 1968, p. 298]

In the Introduction to the encyclopedia-size, 742-pages volume “Society, Culture, Personality. Their Structure and Dynamics: A System of General Sociology” (1947) Sorokin writes: “So much fact-finding sociological work has been done during the past few decades that the greatest need of contemporary sociology is not so much a further collection of facts as assimilating the existing data, presenting them in a sound, logical order, and rebuilding the framework of sociology as a systematic science.” [Sorokin, 194, p. XIII]. This task is brilliantly accomplished since the monograph is, perhaps the most systematic presentation of the scholar’s integralistic theory of the structure and evolution of the sociocultural universe to date.

In 1957 the light of day sees a compact, but very important article “Integralism – My Philosophy.” In this work the scholar defines integralism as a complex, synthetic approach to the study of society, culture, and personality. The scientist, in particular, states that during the last few centuries, the activities of humanity in the field of Truth (scientific discoveries) and Beauty (arts) rushed ahead of activities in the field of

Goodness (altruistic love). The path out of this crisis P.A. Sorokin envisions in the ways of increase of the unselfish creative love and solidarity ethics in the society.

Hence his interest to the theory of creative altruism, which he develops in the 40s and 50s of the 20th century. At the end of the same, Integralistic Period, the scholar also turns to the cyclical concepts of the sociocultural evolution. The Sorokin's recurring theme about the loss of relevance by the notion of endless historical progress originates precisely during this time.

6. Altruistic Period (1950s)

During the fifth, Altruistic Period (1950s) the thinker turns directly to the solution of the global problems of humanity. The scholar proposes the program of saving humanity on the basis of unselfish love, and at his initiative the Harvard Research Center in Creative Altruism opens its doors.

During this period the scholar publishes one book after another: "Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis" (1950), "Altruistic Love" (1950), "Explorations in the Field of Altruistic Love and Behavior" (1950), "The Ways and Power of Love" (1954), "Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology and Related Sciences" (1956), "American Sexual Revolution" (1957), "Power and Morality" (1959) and others.

In 1954 the scholar publishes 552-pages monograph "The Ways and Power of Love." He presents in it the doctrine of "creative altruism" which the scholar considers the most important instrument for overcoming the lack of spirituality in the modern, sensate civilization. Based on the extensive research and analysis, the thinker concludes that neither democratic reforms, nor even creation of international political instruments like the United Nations by themselves cannot prevent wars and conflicts. The tasks of human survival, warns Sorokin, demand altruistic re-education of the society's leaders and its citizens.

7. Generalizing Period (1960s)

In the 1960s, during the sixth, Generalizing Period of his scholarly activity P.A. Sorokin again "inventories" contemporary theories of philosophy of history and social sciences in search of effective workable means and tools for solution of the humanity's eternal problems.

The scholar finds many "points of reference" between his theories and the concepts of other "titans of philosophy of history" [Alalykin-Izvekov, 2011] and actively polemicizes with a number of them.

During this period the scholar writes such works as "Modern Historical and Social Philosophies (1963 г.), "The Basic Tendencies of Our Time" (1964), and "Sociological Theories of Today" (1966 г.). To this period relates also the autobiographical essay "The Long Journey" (1963).

In April of 1950 the scholar presents a course of lectures entitled "Modern Philosophy of History" at the Vanderbilt University. The extended version of these lectures is being published in 1950 under the title "Social Philosophy in the Age of Crisis," and in 1963 they see the light of day already under the title "Modern Historical and Social Philosophies."

Tellingly, the original title of the 345-pages book used to be “Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis.” [Sorokin, 1950, 1952] Reminding us of the scholar’s turbulent experience with history-making as a prominent revolutionary, a leading social scholar, a high-profile politician, and a top-level political “expellee,” Sorokin does not hesitate to observe that “philosophies of history” always were a characteristic feature of an age of change, transition, and crisis – an astute observation, which seems to be acutely relevant in the 21 century.

The scientist starts with a review of “philosophies of history” in the chapter entitled “Man’s Reflection on Man’s Destiny in an Age of Crisis.” It provides us with a brief, but comprehensive survey of them through the ages – from “The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage,” to the Ibn Khaldun’s “Prolegomena,” to the Giambattista Vico’s “New Science” and other seminal works of the past. In the subsequent chapters author analyzes the theories of giants of contemporary civilizational thought, such as Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Walter Schubart, Nikolai Berdyaev, F.S.C. Northrop, Alfred L. Kroeber and Albert Schweitzer.

It is easy to see, that in “Philosophies” Sorokin analyzes the sociocultural theories in a less categorical and, instead, more conciliatory fashion, depicting an epic quest of many scholars for the Holy Grail of truth. The scholar notes: “It looks as though all these authors vaguely feel and partly know that there is a kind of vast cultural entity or deep cultural undercurrent, which largely determines most of the surface ripples of the sociocultural ocean. The authors try to grasp its properties, to map its course and area and to clarify its influence upon the surface of cultural phenomena. They seem to agree in some points and in others not; but underlying all discussion is the fundamental agreement that some sort of vast unified cultural systems live and function in the sociocultural ocean.” [Sorokin, 1963, p. 276]

Tellingly, the scholar introduces six (later to become thirteen) briefly outlined below “points of agreement” between the analyzed “historical and social philosophies”: 1) civilizations do exist as and along with other vast cultural entities and systems; 2) the number of those has always been very small; 3) each of these basic types of cultural prototypes is different from the others; 4) each of the vast cultural systems is based upon some “major premise” or “philosophical presupposition” or “prime symbol” or “ultimate value” which the supersystem or civilization articulates, develops, and realizes in all its main compartments, or parts, in the process of its life-career; 5) each of these supersystems, after its objectification and socialization in empirical reality, becomes a meaningful-causal unity; 6) civilizations and other vast cultural entities and supersystems share certain common properties. [Sorokin, 1963, pp. 276–279]

Accordingly, Sorokin ends his deliberation of the “modern historical and social philosophies” with the following rather inclusive statement: “These general characteristics, systematically studied in my works, are explicitly or implicitly present in all the theories discussed. In the case of a few of these traits the authors differ somewhat as to details; but these minor disagreements do not abridge the major agreement in regard to the characteristics mentioned.” [Sorokin, 1963, p. 279]

The 676-pages volume “Sociological Theories of Today” (1966) in many ways concludes the Sorokin’s long, illustrious and in many ways unique scholarly career. In it, the scholar summarizes his analysis of structure and evolution of psychosocial and sociocultural universe.

Having introduced a rigorous scientific apparatus in the form and shape of the classification of existing sociocultural theories, Sorokin presents us now with concisely outlined below thirteen “points of agreement” between them:

1. In the boundless ocean of sociocultural phenomena there exist vast cultural systems, supersystems, or civilizations that live and function as real unities. Danilevsky calls these supersystems “cultural-historical types”; Spengler calls them “high cultures”; Toynbee refers to them as “civilizations”; Kroeber as “high-value patterns”; Schubart, as the “prototypes of culture”; Northrop as “world cultures”; Berdyaev, as “great cultures”; Sorokin calls them “cultural supersystems.”

2. Due to the triple interdependence of the whole system and its parts, these vast supersystems tangibly condition most of the surface rippling of the sociocultural ocean.

3. Without an adequate knowledge of the supersystem we can hardly understand the structural and dynamic properties of all its important parts, just as without a sufficient knowledge of a whole organism, of its gross anatomy and gross physiology of its organs, tissues, and cells.

4. The macrosociological theories give to us, speaking figuratively, a gross anatomy and physiology of the whole cultural universe.

5. The theories agree that the total number of vast cultural supersystems has in the whole human culture been small. The total number of Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee’s “civilizations” does not exceed some 30; R. Westcott gives to us a list of about 300, but the list includes not only world civilizations but also continental, national, provincial, and local civilizations. The world civilizations in this list do not exceed 15. If we take the vastest cultural supersystems or prototypes, most of the examined theories offer to us only two: Northrop’s aesthetic-theoretic; Becker’s sacral-secular; Ortega’s classic-crisis; the dichotomists’ material-nonmaterial; civilization-culture, technological-ideological; Kroeber’s reality-culture and value-culture; Sorokin’s ideational, idealistic, and sensate (plus eclectic); and Schubart’s harmonious, heroic, ascetic and messianic. If instead we take other classifications of vast cultural formations, such as Paleolithic-Neolithic-copper-bronze-iron-machine civilizations or hunting-pastoral-agricultural-industrial or “rural-urban” or any other classification base either upon main types of religion or of economy or of the type of family and kinship or of government or of solidarity (*Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft*, “mechanical-organic”) or Saint-Simon’s critical-organic or Comte’s theological-metaphysical-positive or Vico’s civilizations “of the age of gods, of heroes, and of man,” the number of the basic types still remains very small.

6. Each of the vast cultural systems is based upon some major premise or philosophical presupposition or prime symbol or ultimate value that the supersystem or civilization articulates, develops, and realizes in the process of its life-career in all its main compartments or subsystems.

7. Each of these supersystems, after its objectification and socialization in empirical reality, becomes a meaningful-causal unity.

8. The theories agree on the general characteristics of systems, supersystems, and civilizations. Explicitly or implicitly almost all the examined theories ascribe to it the following properties: a reality different from that of its parts; individuality; triple (general and differential) interdependence of parts upon one another and upon the whole system and of the whole system upon its parts; the preservation of its individuality or its “sameness” in spite of a change of its parts; the change in togetherness of all important parts; the self-directing (immanent) change and self-determination of its life-career with external forces either accelerating or slowing up, facilitating or hindering the unfolding and realization of the potentialities of a system or supersystem, sometimes even destroying it, but hardly ever transforming it into something radically different from its inherent potentialities; the selectivity of a system or supersystem in taking in the congenial and in rejecting the uncongenial elements of the external world; and the limited variability of a system or supersystem.

9. The theories agree in their rejection of the linear conception of the life-course of systems and supersystems and of historical processes generally in favor of either cyclical or rhythmical or continuously varying conceptions.

10. The theories all have a tangible similarity of the “phases” or “prototypes” of cultural supersystems or civilizations surveyed. The phase of growth or “spring” of Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee’s civilizations is similar in several traits with Sorokin’s ideational, Schubart’s ascetic-messianic, Kroeber’s “religiously dominated,” Northrop’s dominantly aesthetic, Berdyaev’s barbaric-religious, and Becker’s sacral prototypes. The phase of decline of civilizations in Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee-Koneczny’s theory resembles Sorokin’s overripe sensate, Schubart’s heroic, Northrop’s theoretic, Kroeber’s secular, Berdyaev’s humanistic-secular, Schweitzer’s decline of civilizations, and Ortega’s crisis civilization.

11. The eleventh similarity consists in an affirmation by most of the theories examined (with the exception of Danilevsky’s and Spengler’s) that the whole life-process of various civilizations, supersystems, or prototypes follows different courses in their genesis, growth, life-patterns, life-span, blossoming and withering, decline and resurrection.

12. The theories examined unanimously diagnose our time as the time of the greatest crisis, as the end of the epoch of domination of the sensate–theoretic-secular–Promethean-scientific-technological culture dominant during the last four or five centuries and as a transition period toward a now emerging messianic-integral-new medieval-aesthetic-theoretic prototype of civilization or culture.

13. All theories stress the coming reevaluation of hitherto dominant values, including a radical reconsideration of methods and ways of cognition. Practically all the theories expect, in the culture to come, a reunification of the supreme values of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness – hitherto separated from one another – into one “*summum bonum*.” [Sorokin, 1966, pp. 378–382]

The scholar concludes his analysis of similarities and uniformities in the examined culturological theories with these remarkably conciliatory and

compromising remarks: “Agreement in these thirteen items strongly suggests the rough validity of these conclusions: Otherwise, a concordance could hardly be achieved on the part of distinguished scholars so different from one another in their philosophical background and their methods, in the starting points and the materials of their study, in their mentality, personal preferences, and life-history. Despite the shortcomings of these theories, each of them brings into the open one or more important aspects of cultural realities; each of them enriches our understanding of the structure and nature, relationships, and processes of macrocultural unities and, consequently, of the whole cultural universe, including our own personality and behavior.” [Sorokin, 1966, pp. 378–382]

Conclusions

1. Pitirim Sorokin’s unique circumstances of life motivate him towards continual improvement of his intellectual abilities and skills with the goal of achieving a comprehensive knowledge of structure and evolution of the sociocultural universe. Despite enormous challenges that befall him, the thinker steadily follows his moral compass towards the universal ideals of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Learning from the best minds of his generation and possessing one of the most powerful intellects of his time he confidently masters accumulated by the humanity scientific, intellectual, historic, cultural, and aesthetic treasures. Continuously absorbing the best achievements of the world of thought and constantly analyzing the surrounding sociocultural universe, the thinker forms a holistic and scientific picture of its structure, evolution, and the perspectives of its development. During his lifetime, the scholar’s world-view proceeds through six stages: 1) Christian-Ideational; 2) Positivistic-Behaviorist; 3) Transitional; 4) Integralistic; 5) Altruistic, and 6) Generalizing.

2. The scholar makes a significant, often pioneering contributions to such areas of expertise as the subject and method of sociology, sociology of crime and punishment, sociology of jurisprudence, sociology of religion and morality, sociology of revolution, sociology of family and marriage, sociology of human behavior in extreme conditions (war, hunger, pestilence, etc.), history of sociology, social philosophy, and philosophy of history. He also develops a number of new scientific concepts, theories and paradigms, including theory of social and cultural stratification and mobility, theory of social and cultural dynamics, theory of integralism, theory of convergence, and theory of creative altruism.

3. One of the most significant contributions of P.A. Sorokin to human knowledge is in the field of philosophy of history. In fact, the scholar was a philosopher of history throughout his unique and extensive scholarly career, analyzing the structure and evolution of the sociocultural universe through the prism of a number of paradigms. Having contributed a significant and still not completely appreciated contribution to the human thought, Sorokin develops a unique, integral paradigm of philosophy of history. It includes theory of integrated evolution of society, culture, and personality; theory of calamities, theory of cultural

supersystems, theory of convergence, principle of immanent change; principle of limits, and other important theories and concepts.

4. Through the centuries every major thinker analyzed the sociocultural universe from a unique point, angle, or perspective. Despite significant differences in their views, they all contributed mightily to philosophy of history, having enriched it with their concepts, theories, and paradigms. Having analyzed a colossal amount of scholarly sources, and maintaining an active scholarly dialogue with major thinkers of his day, P.A. Sorokin concludes that, despite separating them significant differences, their ideas, concepts, theories, and paradigms display significant similarities.

5. The scholar deeply and brilliantly develops an original integral approach to the structure and evolution of the sociocultural universe, making a lasting contribution to the theory of the macro-level sociocultural phenomena and the long-term sociocultural processes. One of the more developed aspects of the Sorokin's philosophy of history is his theory of "sociocultural supersystems" as the macro-units of historical development. Having developed theoretical foundations of the integral study of social development, the scholar has put it on a scientific basis. The essential part of this integral paradigm is his theory of revolutions, wars, hunger, epidemics, and other major calamities and catastrophes. By making those phenomena more transparent and predictable, the scientific analysis can help to alleviate some of their most horrific consequences.

6. In his early works the young scholar considers social upheavals no more than giant nuisances on the path of the humanity's inexorable progress to the social and cultural perfection. However, the ordeal of the World War I (1914–1918), the Russian Revolution (1917), and the Russian Civil War (1917–1923) soon dramatically alters this optimistic outlook. In the process of his continuing quest for the "Holy Grail" of sociocultural universe, the scholar proposes a concept of "sociocultural supersystem," the theory of which he brilliantly and richly develops. This concept becomes a centerpiece of the thinker's philosophy of history. According to this highly original and fascinating paradigm, revolutions, wars, and other sociocultural upheavals punctuate history during the periods of change and crisis. Furthermore, they are often interconnected, triggering each other in the prolonged cycles of horrifying human suffering. After a careful analysis, the scholar arrives to the conclusion that the problem is essentially "systemic" in nature, in other words, periods of crisis arrive when a society is misbalanced and un-integrated. For example, during the last centuries the Western civilization made significant strides in the fields of knowledge (Truth) and art (Beauty), however, lags in altruistic and creative love (Goodness). As a result, civilization itself is in peril. The thinker finds the key to those eternal problems on a higher plane of human thought and endeavor by proposing a number of highly controversial and seemingly paradoxical, yet in essence eternal concepts of unselfish, creative love and a balanced society with a developed system of well integrated, altruistic values.

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