

## So, you want to understand *Russian soul*? Open Danilevsky's book "*Russia and Europe*"

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**Итак, вы хотите понять русскую душу?  
Тогда открывайте книгу Данилевского «Россия и Европа»  
Влад Алалыкин-Извеков**

**Abstract.** The relations between Russia and the *West* have never been particularly easygoing or unambiguous, and, presently, they are yet again at all times low. The way to better understand, as well as to successfully communicate and cooperate with another society is through learning about evolution (and revolutions) of their (as well as one's own) history and culture. Are there any important sources in the Russian cultural heritage that could illuminate these ages-old problems, tendencies, and trends? The year 2021 marks 150 years since publication of Nikolay Danilevsky's book "*Russia and Europe*" (1871), while the next one, the year 2022 denotes 200 years from the date of birth of Danilevsky (1822–1885) himself. The paper highlights multiple sociocultural, sociohistoric, geopolitical, and historiosophic layers of the Danilevsky's enigmatic civilizational legacy. Based on that analysis, it suggests ways for improving relations between the *West* and Russia, as well as for overcoming a *social anomie* in the US.

**Keywords:** Danilevsky, Russia and Europe, cultural-historic type, local civilization, Pan-Slavism, Slavophilism, Pochvennichestvo, Furierism.

**Резюме.** Отношения между Россией и Западом никогда не были особенно простыми и однозначными, а в настоящее время они вновь и вновь оказываются на низком уровне. Путь к лучшему пониманию, а также к успешному общению и сотрудничеству с другим обществом лежит через познание истории и культурных особенностей их эволюции (и революций), но также и своей собственной истории и культуры. Существуют ли в российском культурном наследии важные источники, способные осветить эти вековые проблемы, тенденции и тренды? В 2021 г. исполняется 150 лет со дня публикации книги Николая Данилевского «Россия и Европа» (1871 г.); а в 2022 г. – 200 лет со дня рождения самого Данилевского (1822–1885 гг.). В книге выделены многочисленные социокультурные, социоисторические, геополитические и историософские пласты энигматического цивилизационного наследия Данилевского. На основе этого анализа предлагаются пути улучшения отношений между Западом и Россией, а также преодоления социальной аномии в США.

**Ключевые слова:** Данилевский, Россия и Европа, культурно-исторический тип, локальная цивилизация, панславизм, славянофилизм, почвенничество, Фурьеризм.

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## *Content*

1. Who is Danilevsky?
  2. “*Russia and Europe*” as a “Catechism or Codex of Slavophilism.”
    - 2.1. *Pan-Slavism*
    - 2.2. *Slavophilism*
    - 2.3. *Pochvennichestvo*
    - 2.4. *Fourierism*
  3. “*Russia and Europe*” as an attempt at great historiosophy
    - 3.1. *Cultural-historical types as local civilizations*
    - 3.2. *Criticism of Danilevsky’s theory*
    - 3.3. *New concepts*
  4. Legacy
    - 4.1. *Danilevsky’s ideas and contemporary political discourse*
    - 4.2. *What’s next?*
  5. America: A Hero Path or a Social Anomie?
- Conclusions*

## *Содержание*

1. Кто такой Данилевский?
  2. «*Россия и Европа*» как «Катехизис или кодекс славянофильства».
    - 2.1. *Панславизм*
    - 2.2. *Славянофильство*
    - 2.3. *Почвенничество*
    - 2.4. *Фурьеризм*
  3. «*Россия и Европа*» как попытка великой историософии.
    - 3.1. *Культурно-исторические типы как локальные цивилизации*
    - 3.2. *Критика теории Данилевского*
    - 3.3. *Новые концепции*
  4. Наследие
    - 4.1. *Идеи Данилевского и современный политический дискурс*
    - 4.2. *Что дальше?*
  5. Америка: путь героя или социальная аномия?
- Выводы*

“... This book is based on the idea of the originality lying in the soul of the Slavic world. The book embraces this issue so deeply and fully that it could be called a catechism or codex of Slavophilism.”  
*Nikolay N. Strakhov*

## 1. Who is Danilevsky?

It is midday on January 20, 2021, and millions are witnessing the inauguration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr. as the 46th president of the United States on TV screens. Despite seemingly festive atmosphere, the historic event is taking place in the midst of profound political, public health, economic, and national security crises. Presently, it is a turn of poetry reading, which is a rare, however welcomed part of this hallowed tradition on the steps of the US Capitol since 1961. This year the honor belongs to a recent Harvard University graduate from Los Angeles Amanda S.C. Gorman. The upright, elegantly dressed poet and civil rights activist descends down colorfully decorated stairs. A dazzling smile, a bright Prada yellow coat, and an embracing her classic style coiffure crown-like red Prada headband make the young genius look like the Ancient Greek muse of poetry *Calliope* herself. Amanda recites her poem “The Hill We Climb” which she completed on the night of the recent storming of this same venerable edifice by a violent mob of insurrectionists. The profound philosophical depth of the poem’s message, the exquisite phrasing, and the unique delivery literally stun the nation and the world.

We've braved the belly of the beast  
 We've learned that quiet isn't always peace  
 And the norms and notions  
 of what just is  
 Isn't always just-ice  
 And yet the dawn is ours  
 before we knew it  
 Somehow we do it  
 Somehow we've weathered and witnessed  
 a nation that isn't broken  
 but simply unfinished.

Let us imprint this moment in memory, and fast-rewind history to about 150 years back. Presently, we are in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Russian Empire, on a rocky and rustic, yet hauntingly beautiful Black Sea shore. Perhaps, we are just where the ancient Greek hero *Jason* with the help of beautiful but deadly *Medea* and his fellows *Argonauts* struggled to wrestle the coveted *Golden Fleece* from the cunning *King Aeëtes* of the kingdom of *Colchis*. It is January, however in this mild, sub-tropical climate the sea rarely freezes over in winter, and the peaceful oncoming waves with a quiet rustle caress the glittering grey and bluish-black pebbles.

We see a casually dressed, bearded man in his early forties sitting on the stump of a giant exotic tree. He is handsome, tall, powerfully built, and seems to be deep in thoughts. The sheer monumentality of his brooding presence evokes the heroic, large-scale sculptures by Michelangelo Buonarroti and Auguste Rodin. In front of the stranger, a small fire lazily crackles while licking a few dry, washed out by the sea wooden branches. A couple of freshly caught fishes are sizzling on a skillet, spreading the tantalizing aroma. A large hunting knife, featuring the walrus ivory handle and the skillfully engraved double-barreled rifle are easily within reach, if needed. Two big shepherd dogs are lying around the fire, carefully following every man's move and ready to spring to action.

However, the stranger is hardly paying attention at them. His steely eyes are piercing through the bluish-green waves and the misty line of the horizon. It is as if he is intently gazing at some momentous events happening far away from the Black Sea shores, or even into the yet unknown future. What is it that he is seeing? The fierce bombardment of Fort Sumter? The endless, bloody battles – at Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Nashville, Atlanta, Richmond? President Lincoln signing the *Emancipation Proclamation*? The US Capitol dome stubbornly rising up despite the raging around Civil War? Robert E. Lee surrendering to Ulysses S. Grant?

Presently, the unknown removes a pencil and a notebook out of his green tarpaulin windbreaker's pocket and, oblivious to the whistling sound of the intensifying sea breeze, writes: “ (...) the existence of the United States as an independent state indicates (...) the birth of a newly-formed nationality, completely different from the English. (...) a nationality that has not yet become clear and is still in the period of its ethnographic formation. (...)”<sup>2</sup>

Meet the prominent Russian biologist, historian, mathematician, and philosopher Nikolai Danilevsky. During the years 1863–1867 this Russian polymath led yet another groundbreaking scientific expedition, this time surveying the geography and the wild life of the Black Sea, as well as its tributaries. From the latter part of 1863 until late in 1867, he conducted a series of six grueling surveys; around the Sea of Azov, to the river Dnieper, to the river Manych, around the Black Sea, to the river Kuban, and to the river Danube. [MacMaster, 1967: 101]. Danilevsky's biographer and translator Stephen M. Woodburn explains:

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<sup>2</sup> The quotes are from Danilevsky's book “*Russia and Europe*” pp. 192; 368. The details of “meeting Danilevsky in person” are, of course, imaginary, however based on author's scholarly knowledge of the period, as well as his personal familiarity with the realities of the region. (Author's note).

In the following year, 1863, Nikolai Iakovlevich ... was assigned as “head of an expedition for the investigation into the fisheries of the Black and Azov Seas.” This expedition lasted five years. In September 1863 Nikolai Iakovlevich took his family down the Volga to Tsarina,<sup>3</sup> then crossed the Don by rail and went down to the Black Sea. He tried to arrange a permanent residence for his family, first in Feodosia, then in Nikita, but finally settled in Miskhor on the South Coast [of the Crimea] on 9 March 1864. From Miskhor he made six journeys in the following order: in 1864, around the Azov Sea; in 1865, on the Dnieper; in spring 1866; on the Manych [River, tributary of the Don]; in 1867, from 19 May to 19 June, around the Black Sea; from 10 September to 17 October of the same year, to Kuban, and from 23 November to 26 December on the Danube. ... [Woodburn, 2013: XXXI].

In the year 1866, for an outstanding performance in conducting biological, geological, geographical, climatological, and ethnological research, the scientist and explorer won the highest award of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society – the coveted *Constantine Medal*. [MacMaster, 1967: 101]. During the same years, filled with intense scientific research, field, and administrative work, between 1865 to 1868, Danilevsky wrote his historic, political, and philosophical treatise “*Russia and Europe*.”

Let us now fast-forward, this time only about fifty years. It is Friday, December 7, 1917, and we are in Saint Petersburg, Russia, recently renamed Petrograd.<sup>4</sup> We are entering the *Smolny Institute* – a neoclassical building designed in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Italian-born architect *Giacomo Quarenghi* to house Russia’s (and Europe’s) first women’s educational institution. Presently, however, it is the hub of the Russian October Revolution<sup>5</sup> and, obviously, the most fiercely guarded edifice in this sprawling metropolis. We walk up the stairs and push on through a motley revolutionary crowd towards an office on the second floor in the right wing of the building. After passing between two stationed in front of the tall white double doors armed guards, we are in a medium size corner room with a high ceiling.

Three large windows, which open onto a large square with a few scattered trees, allow just enough of scarce in these northern latitudes light. The atmosphere is austere, the furnishings simple, businesslike. We see a covered with green cloth writing desk

<sup>3</sup> Tsaritsyn (1589–1925), then Stalingrad (1925–1961), and presently Volgograd – a city on the western bank of the Volga river. (Author’s note).

<sup>4</sup> Saint Petersburg formerly known as Petrograd (1914–1924) and later Leningrad (1924–1991) is located on the banks of the Neva river which flows into the Gulf of Finland on the Baltic Sea. The city has been founded by Peter the Great in 1703 and became capital of the Russian Empire for more than two hundred years (1712–1728, 1732–1918). (Author’s note).

<sup>5</sup> The October Revolution was a second revolutionary change of government in Russia in 1917. It took place through an armed insurrection in Petrograd (now again Saint Petersburg) on October 25, 1917. (Author’s note).

and a few bentwood chairs. On the desk are books, newspapers, massive ink set, desk calendar, long blade scissors, and a desk lamp. Behind the desk are two groaning from the weight of volumes bookcases and several vintage wall-mounted telephones. In the corner stands emanating warmth tall stove faced with white tiles. At the desk is a compact, lean, yet broad-shouldered man in his late forties, who is intently reading a newspaper. He wears a baggy brown three-piece wool suit with a matching white polka dots tie and a washed out white dress shirt. From the upper pocket of the jacket protrudes a fountain pen.

The stranger's high cheekboned face is adorned with a small reddish beard, a mustache, and crowned with a prominent open forehead. His penetrating eyes are dark-brown, half-squinted, with an ironic sparkle. The facial expressions betray constant and intense mental activity. The man's gaze is serious, concentrated, and the whole demeanor betrays tremendous inner strength and cerebral energy. His uncanny ability of expressing complex utopian ideas in simplistic and bombastic slogans is legendary. While his smile is easy and engaging, and his laughter is contagious, he may be sarcastic and irreverent, and when challenged, utterly ruthless. When talking in Russian on the phone, the stranger speaks very fast, almost without pauses, with a slight lisp.

Indeed, this is Vladimir I. Lenin – the leader of a new Russian revolutionary government.<sup>6</sup> There is an important reason why he studies the newspaper with intense interest. Just a few days ago, he and another, yet not well known to the world government official by the name Joseph Stalin<sup>7</sup> signed the “Appeal to all the Working Muslims of Russia and the East.”<sup>8</sup> In it was disclosed to the world the existence of a secret pact between France, Great Britain, and Russia known as *The Constantinople Agreement*.

It was a “classified” World War I accommodation between Russia, Britain, and France intended for the postwar partition of the Ottoman Empire. According to this notorious arrangement, the Russian Empire would acquire the coveted city of Constantinople (Istanbul) together with surrounding area. It would also allow the

<sup>6</sup> Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) [1870–1924] – a Russian revolutionary, politician, and political theorist, who led the government of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1924, and of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1924. A fervent devotee of *Marxism*, he developed a version of it known as *Leninism*. (Author's note).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin (1878–1953) – a Georgian revolutionary and Soviet politician who ruled the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s until his death in 1953. After Lenin's demise in 1924, he consolidated power to become the Soviet Union's *de facto* dictator by the 1930s. While formally adhering to the Leninist interpretation of *Marxism*, Stalin ruthlessly introduced his own crude version of thereof, known as *Stalinism*. (Author's note).

<sup>8</sup> *Appeal to the Moslems of Russia and the East*. Council of People's Commissars. December 7, 1917. Original Source: *Izvestiia*, No. 232, 7 December 1917, pp. 1-2. Electronic source. Retrieved 02/16/21. <http://soviethistory.msu.edu/1921-2/the-muslim-east/the-muslim-east-texts/appeal-to-the-moslems-of-russia-and-the-east/>

Russian fleet an unimpeded access to the Mediterranean Sea by giving it control over the all-important *Turkish Straits* – a series of waterways that connect the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. In return, Russia would consent to British and French plans for territories and spheres of influence in new Muslim states in the Middle Eastern parts of the Ottoman Empire. This arrangement has been followed by a series of other unpublished military pacts designed for the same purpose.<sup>9</sup>

However, shortly after the “hostile takeover” of power by the *Bolsheviks* in Russia, these undisclosed settlements have been discovered in the former government’s archives and immediately published in the newspaper “Izvestiya” during the month of November, 2017. Presently, the direct language of the “Appeal to all the Working Muslims of Russia and the East” is undoubtedly adding to the former allies humiliation by unequivocally proclaiming that “the secret treaties of the deposed tsar to seize Constantinople, confirmed by the overthrown Kerensky,<sup>10</sup> are now torn and destroyed.”

Lenin turns, reaches out, and removes an intricately decorated tome with brown leather spine and gold-embossed engravings from the shelf. This is a fifth edition of Danilevsky's book “*Russia and Europe*,” published in St. Petersburg in 1895. He opens it and delves into reading. “Ilyich”<sup>11</sup> possesses a phenomenal reading speed of about 2,500 words per minute, ten times faster than the normal reading speed of a literate person. Pages are flickering with a soft rustle:

Europe accuses us of greedily eyeing Constantinople, and we blush at the accusation as if it is indeed some kind of evil thing.<sup>12</sup> ... Sooner or later, like it or not, a struggle with Europe (or at least a significant part of it) is inevitable, over the Eastern Question: that is, over the freedom and independence of Slavdom, over the possession of Tsargrad.<sup>13</sup> ... Constantinople must not be the capital of Russia, must not concentrate in itself the whole life of its people and state, and thus must not directly become part of Russia proper. To gain all the advantages enumerated above for Russia without bringing it easily foreseeable harm, a liberated Constantinople transformed into a true Tsar-grad must in and of itself be

<sup>9</sup> There were three more “diplomatic instruments” for the partition of the Ottoman Empire – *The Treaty of London* [26 April 1915], *The Sykes–Picot Agreement* [April to October 1916], as well as *The Agreement of Saint-Jean de Maurienne* [April to August 1917]. (Author’s note).

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Fyodorovich Kerensky (1881–1970) was a Russian lawyer and revolutionary who was a key political figure in the Russian Revolution of 1917. After the February Revolution of 1917, he joined the newly formed Russian Provisional Government, eventually becoming its second Minister-Chairman. On 7 November 7, 1917 his government was overthrown by the Lenin-led Bolsheviks in the October Revolution. (Author’s note).

<sup>11</sup> *Ilyich* is a Russian patronymic meaning “son of Ilya.” It is often informally refers to Vladimir I. Lenin. (Author’s note).

<sup>12</sup> Danilevsky, N.Ya. (2013). *Russia and Europe*. Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica. p. 251.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 373.

something more than just the capital of the Russian domain, but something less than that in regard to Russia; it must not be too closely connected to it or take on the material significance reserved for Moscow. Simply put, Tsargrad must be the capital not of Russia but of the whole All-Slavic union.<sup>14</sup>

A bitter ironic smile touches Lenin's lips. He leans back in the chair and characteristically inserts his thumbs into the armholes of the vest. It is precisely about this ongoing process of the partition of the world among the leading empires that he wrote in his recent work.<sup>15</sup> The public release of these secret diplomatic treaties will undoubtedly achieve its goal, and the overall effect of the exposé ought to be far-reaching, perhaps, long into the future. Especially significant seems to be the exposure of one of the main driving forces behind the still raging “Great War” – the fanatical desire of the old Russian ruling elites to possess Constantinople. And now, this powerful mainspring behind Russia’s stumbling participation<sup>16</sup> in the “War to End All Wars” has been utterly broken. Thus, yet another decisive blow has been dealt to the imperial international and economic policies. The new, class-conscious revolutionary movements will undoubtedly establish a peaceful world order beyond traditional European diplomacy, without contributions and annexations. They will depart from the ages-old European tradition of back-room deals and secret treaties. Transparency will become the fabric of the emerging international relations and diplomacy.<sup>17</sup> As for the Danilevsky’s *Pan-Slavic and Slavophilism* schemas, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels themselves have been their extreme opponents, branding *Pan-Slavism* as a nationalist, reactionary, petty-bourgeois, as well as a counter-revolutionary ideology. No surprise that these ultra-patriotic, chauvinistic concepts have been adopted as the official tsarist ideology during the reactionary reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II.

It is time for us to leave<sup>18</sup> the “leader of the world proletariat” to his thoughts about “class struggle” and “world revolution,” and return back to the shore of the Black

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>15</sup> The essay on political economy titled “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” has been penned in the spring of 1916 in Zürich, Switzerland, and published in Petrograd, Russia in April, 1917. In chapter six Lenin is addressing the problem of the division of the world between the “great powers.” (Author’s note).

<sup>16</sup> On the nearsightedness and inefficiency of the WWI era political leaders see Clark, C. (2012). *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. NY: Harper. (Author’s note).

<sup>17</sup> The 19th as well as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century comprise the “golden age” of the grand universalistic theories and narratives. For example, on the competing Lenin’s and Woodrow Wilson’s messianic geopolitical visions see Fedyashin, A. How Lenin and Wilson Changed the World. *The National Interest*. March 25, 2017. Electronic source. Retrieved 02.09.21. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-lenin-wilson-changed-the-world-19900>

<sup>18</sup> The details of “meeting Lenin in person” are, of course, imaginary, however based on author’s scholarly knowledge of the period, as well as his personal familiarity with the realities of the region. (Author’s note).

Sea, where we have met Nikolay Danilevsky. He is still there, now standing above the extinguished by the gusts of now rip-roaring wind campfire, his gigantic figure barely visible against the backdrop of the raging sea. The wind fiercely rips scraps of white foam from the crests of blue-green waves, which then crash onto the shore with a steady, thunderous roar. Illuminated by dazzling lightning bolts, desperately screaming seagulls scurry above the scene of total chaos. Evidently, even the nature in this imaginary time travel of ours symbolically reflects the extraordinary in their power, scale, and significance events of the coming decades.

And so – what is this book? Why, after its appearance exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, scholars and thinkers, as well as geopolitical “movers and shakers” continue to argue about its meaning? Perhaps, one of the reasons is that it is not one book, but rather several books in one. Like the iconic Russian wooden “matryoshka doll,” the volume contains multiple layers of historiosophy, geopolitics, culture, and even arts, as well as a whole lot of theorizing about the evolution of societies and, of course, about the human nature. Let us now take a brief look at the historic and cultural movements contextualizing, as well as a number of seminal ideas underlying this perplexing work.

## 2. “Russia and Europe” as a “Catechism or Codex of Slavophilism.”

The Danilevsky’s complex book reflects in itself multiple historic as well as contemporary sociocultural, socioeconomic, and historiosophic ideas, movements, and trends. Among some of the most influential are *Pan-Slavism*, *Slavophilism*, *Pochvennichestvo*, and *Fourierism*.

### 2.1. *Pan-Slavism*

*Pan-Slavism* was an ideology and a based on it movement among the Slavic peoples in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It originated and was most widely spread in the Balkans, where the non-Slavic powers, such as the Byzantine Empire, the Republic of Venice, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire had ruled the *South Slavs* for centuries. Recognizing a common ethnic, historic, cultural, and linguistic background among the Slav peoples, *Pan-Slavism* was based on the idea of some form of Slavic integration and/or unification for the achievement of the common cultural and political goals. The American philosopher and historian Hans Kohn summarizes:

Pan-Slavism, a movement in which nationalist elements were mingled with supra-national and often imperialist trends, was a product of the political awakening of the intellectuals in central and eastern Europe, which was brought about by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. But even more potent was the influence of German romanticism and of a linguistic Pan-Germanism as represented by Arndt and Fichte.

Pan-Slavism proclaimed the affinity of various peoples, in spite of differences of political citizenship and historical background, of civilization and religion, solely on the strength of an affinity of language. It could thus arise only at a time when under the influence of Johann Gottfried Herder the national language, the mother tongue, was regarded as a determining factor for man's loyalty – and his intellectual and spiritual life. (...) In 1826, the word Pan-Slavism was first used. Like similar words – nationalism, socialism, etc. – it owed its origin and its spread to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. [Kohn, 1960: IX; 325].

## 2.2. Slavophilism

Another source for Danilevsky's concepts has been the movement known as *Slavophilism*. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia is beginning to absorb the ideas and culture of Western Europe at an accelerated pace, and that inexorably 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.

*Slavophiles* vigorously oppose the dissemination of the Western institutions in Russia, and, instead, envision its development upon the values derived from its early history. 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).

Besides Danilevsky, among most prominent Russian thinkers influenced by *Slavophiles* ideology are author and philosopher Konstantin N. Leontyev (1831–1891), writer and philosopher Fyodor M. Dostoyevsky (1821–1881), writer and philosopher Leo N. Tolstoy, religious and political philosopher Ivan A. Ilyin (1883–1954), as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> century novelist and historian Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008).

There is quite a difference of opinions among social thinkers about the roots of *Slavophilism* itself. Some of the Western scholars suggest them to be the German classical philosophy (Schelling, Hegel) and the German idealism (Friedrich von Schelling). The American political science scholar Thornton Anderson notes:

Often presented as an indigenous pattern of thought peculiar to Russia, Slavophilism becomes more readily understandable if viewed instead as a part of the great philosophical reaction against the devastating

rationalism of Hume, Voltaire, and the French Revolution. Its elements – its admiration for ideals (even when plainly contradicted by realities), its opposition to materialism and its tendency toward mysticism, its emphasis upon religion and its attempt to submerge reason in it – in short, its inconsistencies and irrationalities, then are more understandable. The most fruitful segment of that reaction, German idealism, attained in Friedrich von Schelling a form of religious mysticism adaptable to Russian Orthodoxy, and beginning with the professors of science in the universities, his system gradually captivated many Russians. It thus formed the principal connecting link by which the conservative thought of the West spread to Russia and reinforced opposition there to the importation of innovations from the West. [Anderson, 1967: 213]

Yet, the *Slavophiles* themselves defended the idea of the originality of *Slavophilism*, describing it as having been built on the premises of the *Byzantine* sociohistoric and religious heritage, as well as the *Russian Orthodox theology*. In some ways, a classic of civilizational thought, the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee reconciles those contradictory views. He notes that in any society that needs to confront a more powerful adversarial civilization, two movements may arise: *Herodianism* – calling for the introduction of new ideas, as well as copying the advanced foreign institutions, and *Zealotism* – advocating isolation in order to preserve the traditional way of life. [Toynbee, 1957: 231–238]

### 2.3. *Pochvennichestvo*

*Pochvennichestvo*<sup>19</sup> was a late 19th-century movement in Russia that, while sharing a number of features with *Slavophilism*, represents a more conservative and assertive version of it. The prominent representatives of this school of thought were the writer and philosopher of history Konstantin Leontyev, philosopher, publicist and literary critic Nikolay N. Strakhov (1828-1896), as well as Danilevsky himself.

While supporting the emancipation of serfs, both the *Slavophiles* and the *Pochvenniks* rejected the universalism of the *Enlightenment* and the liberal and the Marxist ideas, as well as opposed the *Europeanization* in general. At the same time, *Pochvenniks* adopted more assertive anti-Protestant, anti-Catholic, and generally anti-Western stance, as well as embraced *Pan-Slavism*.

As it is evident from the Danilevsky's and the Leontyev's legacy, they also developed and advocated the view of history as evolution of the unique "local" *civilizations* (*cultural-historic types*) while extolling the "true and eternal" virtues and values of the steeped in the *Byzantine* sociocultural, sociopolitical, and religious tradition *Pan-Slavic* "civilization."

<sup>19</sup> *Pochvennichestvo*: from Russian "почва" – "soil." (Author's note).

## 2.4. Fourierism

In the 1840s, the utopian-socialist ideas of the French thinker Charles Fourier are becoming very popular among the younger representatives of Russian *intelligencia*.<sup>20</sup> Danilevsky eagerly studied and has been greatly influenced by them. For example, the features of the Fourier's *phalanx*<sup>21</sup> may be discerned in Danilevsky's idealized depiction of the Russian rural *obshchina*.<sup>22</sup>

The American historian Frank Fadner notes that “the principle of nationality which supported the ideological structure of pan-Slavist thought (...) most completely synthesized in the work of N. Ya. Danilevskii. (...)” [Fadner, 1962: 1]. The Danilevsky's biographer and translator Stephen M. Woodburn agrees, noting that “(...) classical Slavophilism lacked ambition and goals, its adherents having a narrowly Russian focus, rooted in the past. Danilevskii crystallized the identity politics of the Slavophile movement, but gave it a broader future orientation outside Russia's borders.” [Woodburn, 2013: XII-XIII] The Russian philosopher, publicist and literary critic Nikolay N. Strakhov recapitulates: “It is certainly logical to attribute Russia and Europe to what is called the Slavophile school of our literature, since this book is based on the idea of the originality lying in the soul of the Slavic world. The book embraces this issue so deeply and fully that it could be called a catechism or codex of Slavophilism.” [Strakhov, 2013: XXXVIII]

Thus, there is a definite consensus among social prominent scholars and thinkers, that Danilevsky has masterfully conflated, laboriously substantiated (correctly or not), and magnificently aggrandized the main ideas of *Pan-Slavism*, *Slavophilism*, and of related schools of thought, as well as “weaponized” them, thus creating a *Bismarckian-type* theory of a hard-nosed *Pan-Slavic* “realpolitik.” Let us now look deeper into Danilevsky's thought process.

## 3. “Russia and Europe” as an attempt at great historiosophy

### 3.1. Cultural-historical types as local civilizations

*Encyclopedia Britannica* authoritatively informs us, that Danilevsky “was the first to propound the philosophy of history as a series of distinct civilizations.” [Danilevsky,

<sup>20</sup> François Marie Charles Fourier (1772–1837) – a French philosopher and one of the founders of *utopian socialism*. (Author's note).

<sup>21</sup> *Phalanx* – a utopian socialist commune. (Author's note).

<sup>22</sup> *Obshchina* (Russian for "commune") peasant village communities in Imperial Russia in the 19th and 20th century. (Author's note).

2021] The thinker publishes his classic book, initially as a series of articles, in a monthly literary and political journal *Zarya*<sup>23</sup> during the year of 1869.

Danilevsky is unhappy with canons of the contemporary to him, religion-based historic studies which claim a linear, teleological evolution of the world history, as well as a rigid division of it into “ancient,” “medieval,” and “modern” periods. As a natural scientist, Danilevsky is searching for a rational as opposed to a superficial method of study of the sociocultural world. In other words, he strives to offer a *Copernican-type* rather than a *Ptolemaic-type* system of social sciences, and he calls it a “natural” versus an “artificial” approach. [Danilevsky, 2013: 58–75]

The scholar identifies four categories of the sociohistoric activity in various societies: religious, cultural political, and socioeconomic [Danilevsky, 2013: 405]. In thinker’s view, those have given rise to ten *cultural-historical types*: Egyptian; Chinese; Assyrian-Babylonian-Phoenician; Chaldean or ancient Semite; Indian; Iranian; Jewish; Greek; Roman; neo-semitic or Arab; Germanic-Roman or European. [Danilevsky, 2013: 73]. According to the scholar, those and other advanced societies develop according to certain “laws of historical development”:

*Law 1.* Any tribe of family of peoples characterized by a separate language or group of languages with similarities that can be readily detected without deep philological investigation constitutes a distinct cultural-historical type, it has already grown out of its infancy and is inclined toward and generally capable of historical development.

*Law 2.* For the civilization of a distinct cultural–historical type to be born and develop, the peoples belonging to it must have political independence.

*Law 3.* The principles of civilization for one cultural-historical type are not transferrable to the peoples of another type. Each type produces its own, influenced more or less by foreign civilizations preceding or contemporary to it.

*Law 4.* The civilization of each cultural-historical type only attains fullness, diversity, and richness when its diverse ethnographic elements, independent but not combined into a political whole, form a federation or political system of states.<sup>24</sup>

*Law 5.* The course of development for cultural-historical types closely resembles that of perennial plants that bear fruit only once, whose period of growth is indefinitely long, but whose period of flowering and bearing fruit is relatively short and exhausts its vitality once and for all. [Danilevsky, 2013:76]

<sup>23</sup> “Zarya” (In Russian: “dawn”) was published in Saint Petersburg, Russia in 1869–1872. (Author’s note).

<sup>24</sup> A correct translation from Russian would be “independent *and* not combined into a political whole, form a federation or political system of states.” See: p. 116 in Danilevsky, N. I. (2008). *Russia and Europe*. (In Russian). Moscow: Terra. (Authors’ note).

As it is clearly evident, Danilevsky consistently turns to the bio-organismic metaphors in his analysis of his *cultural-historical types*, which, in his mind, originate and develop similar to living organisms. Each type proceeds through the predetermined stages of youth, adulthood, old age, and demise. And, just like live organisms, Danilevsky's *cultural-historic types* are in a continuous competition with each other, as well as with the external environment. Thus, the course of history represents a process of displacement of one *cultural-historical type* by another. Stephen M. Woodburn comments on Danilevsky's natural science-influenced analytical approach:

Here his scientific career informed his politics. It is crucial to remember that Danilevskii the nationalist was first and foremost a naturalist (or what we now call a biologist), concerned with the proper classification of specimens by their inherent similarities or differences. His vocation provides the essential metaphor and the scientific-positivist outlook shaping his book. ...As a naturalist he was concerned with proper classification, grouping like organisms together on the basis of similarities. [Woodburn, 2013: XII]

As to *Europe* and the *Slavs*, Danilevsky believes that represent fundamentally different *sociohistoric types*. The scholar perceives the *Slavic sociocultural type* as an entity in its youthful prime and conceives a geopolitical agenda for its future. The plan involves integration of the Slavic peoples into a *Pan-Slavic Union* with its capital in Constantinople. As we already know from our imaginary meeting with Danilevsky on the shore of the Black Sea sometime in 1860s, in relation to the *New World* Danilevsky puts forward a similar idea of a forthcoming new and uniquely American *cultural-historical type* [Danilevsky, 2013: 192; 368]. Stephen M. Woodburn reviews for us Danilevsky's thought process:

The book can be divided into three sections. The first, chapters 1-7, develops his theory of the biology of nations to explain the disconnect between Russia and Europe, and compares his theory to other sciences – which progress from data collection to an “artificial system” or flawed paradigm that requires a “natural system” or improved paradigm to resolve its flaws – to justify his theory of cultural-historic types as a “natural system” of this kind for the study of human history. The second section, chapters 8-11, delves deeper into history to explain a series of differences or distinctions (*razlichii*) between the Germanic-Roman and the Slavic types: the difference in mental framework, the confessional or religious difference, and the difference in the course of historical upbringing. It concludes in an examination of Russian history diagnosing “Europeanism” (*evropeinichan'e*) as the sickness or syndrome afflicting Russia in its development forcing its growth into an unnatural course. The last section, chapters 12-17, concerns the Eastern Question (the host of

issues surrounding the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the fate of its territories and waterways), in which Danilevskii saw a coming shock that would jolt the Russian national spirit to awaken from its slumber, shake off this disease, and fulfill its historical destiny: to create a political federation of Slavic states with Russia at the head, bringing the Slavic cultural-historical type to fruition. The second and third sections account for Danilevskii's association with the Slavophiles and the movement known as Pan-Slavism, although this requires some context. While he did quote Slavophiles in the text and epigrams throughout the work, and while his friend Strakhov called the book a "catechism or codex of Slavophilism," Danilevskii pressed the romantic nationalism of the Slavophiles into the pragmatic mold of Bismarckian *Realpolitik*. [Woodburn, 2013: XXIV]

### 3.2. Criticism of Danilevsky's theory

Danilevsky is a true pioneer of the macro-level and the long-term sociocultural studies. In his classic book he laid the foundations of a number of scholarly areas of expertise. Practically all the scholars of global studies owe a debt of gratitude to him. The scholar brilliantly succeeds in criticizing the linear notion of the progression of world history and especially of the contemporary to him artificial division of it into the consequently arranged "ancient," "medieval," and "modern" periods. He correctly asserts that every society may have its own stages of the sociohistoric evolution. He also made mistakes since some of the most fundamental laws of the structure and the evolution of the sociocultural universe have been discovered only after his untimely demise during his last scientific expedition in 1885 [Sorokin, 1956, 1963, 1966, 1991].

For example, when it comes to the elaboration of the evolution of "life-careers" of the "cultural-historic types," his highly metaphoric bio-organismic concept understandably falters. Being a naturalist, Danilevsky "appropriates" his notions and concepts from the familiar, contemporary to him "toolbox" of natural sciences. He did not, not he could not take in consideration yet undiscovered properties, characteristics, and regularities, specific only to the sociocultural universe. As a result, his highly metaphoric schema of the structure and the evolution of the "cultural-historic entities" remained, in his own words, "artificial." Pitirim A. Sorokin addresses the structure of Danilevsky (and his followers) "artificial" paradigm of the sociocultural universe as follows:

The first fatal shortcoming of Danilevsky's, Spengler's, and Toynbee's conceptions (on this point) consists of their acceptance of their "cultural-historical type," High Culture, or "civilization" as a real unity, in the sense of either a causal or a causal-meaningful system. Like the so-called "functional anthropologists" and "totalitarian integrators," they assume

that the *total* culture of each of their “prototypes,” High Cultures, and “civilizations” is completely integrated and represents one meaningfully consistent and causally unified whole, thus making a sort of cultural supersystem that embraces in itself all the cultural phenomena of the Egyptian, Chinese, Appollinian, Magian, Faustian, or any other culture-civilization they mention. [Sorokin, 1963: 209]

Grounding his analysis in the fundamental *theory of social and cultural dynamics*<sup>25</sup> Sorokin further explains that “the Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee type, High Culture, or civilization is neither a causal, nor a meaningful, nor a causal-meaningful system, but rather a *cultural field where a multitude of vast and small cultural systems and congeries – partly mutually harmonious, partly neutral, partly contradictory – co-exist*. A part of the systems are meaningfully and causally connected to make vaster systems; a part are connected through causal ties only; a part only through indirect causal ties; and a large part are nothing more than spatially adjacent congeries. The totality of all these systems and congeries does not make any unified cultural system, whether Egyptian, Babylonian, Magian, or Mayan “civilization” or “culture-historical type.” (...) Thus all three scholars make the basic error of taking for a civilizational-cultural system something that is no unity at all. They crown this error by the further one of *mixing up the cultural and social systems (organized groups), and they display an additional inconsistency even in this operation*. After all, the Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee classifications are not so much classifications of civilizational or cultural systems as they are of social systems (organized groups).” [Sorokin, 1963: 213-214; 216]

As to the essential characteristics of theories which belong to the bio-organismic paradigm, Sorokin briefly summarizes them as follows:

First, the society or social group is a special kind of an organism in a biological sense of the word. Second, being an organism, society resembles, in its essential characteristics, the constitution and the functions of a biological organism. Third, as an organism, society is subject to the same biological laws as those by which a biological organism functions and lives. Fourth, sociology is a science which is to be based primarily upon biology. [Sorokin, 1956: 201-202]

The “life-careers” of groups and societies obviously differ from those of plants or living organisms. Sorokin notes referring to the fallacy of the organismic univariant life-course of their “civilizations”:

<sup>25</sup> See Sorokin, P. (1937–1941). *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. Cincinnati: American Book Company. 4 vols. (Author’s note).

The second mistake of Danilevsky, Spengler and Toynbee (in his earlier volumes) is their contention that the life-course of all civilizations runs one univariant “organic” cycle: They are all born, then grow, and eventually disintegrate and die. This unduly generalized model of the life-course of civilizations can, at best, be applied to some of the organized social groups as the central agency of each of their “civilizations.” (...) But in no way can the univariant model of birth, maturity, and death be applied to any of the “civilizations.” Since the total culture of each of these “civilizations” has never been integrated into one consistent system, it evidently cannot disintegrate. [Sorokin, 1966, 219-220]

Thus, as an attempt at grand historiosophy, Danilevsky’s work fails to meet the rigorous criteria of a contemporary scientific social research. The scrupulously elaborated by Danilevsky historiosophic schema, though impressive, is ultimately incorrect. While striving to discover a rational, “natural” theory, he was able to offer only a highly metaphoric, “artificial” theory of humanity’s historic evolution. As all metaphorical schemas, it can only “work” within certain limits and to a certain extent.

### 3.3. *New concepts*

As we have already observed, Danilevsky's book prefigured a number of theories in Oswald Spengler's “The Decline of the West,” Arnold Toynbee’s “A Study of History,” Carroll Quigley’s “The Evolution of Civilizations,” and multiple other important sociohistoric sources, essentially establishing the field of the *comparative theory of civilizations*. For example, continuing in the framework of the Danilevsky’s paradigm, Toynbee had proposed five main stages of the civilizations-societies evolution: *Genesis, Growth, Time of Troubles, Universal State, and Disintegration*. Quigley has expanded their number to seven: *Mixture, Gestation, Expansion, Age of Conflict, Universal Empire, Decay, and Invasion*. However, the model remained not only cyclical, which for the development societies is essential correct (they are all finite), but unnecessarily rigid.

Yet, there are ways to solve this problem. Using the results of contemporary fundamental social research, we have developed a “universal” model of the sociohistoric evolution of societies. In it, we not only increased the number of stages to nine, but also introduced a virtually unlimited amount of possible variations. It includes such stages as: *Emergence of Groups; Formation of Societies; Mixture; Gestation; Expansion; Conflict/Time of Troubles; Universal State/Empire; Decay, and Invasion / Implosion / Force Majeure* stages. A society (or a “civilization,” perceived as society) proceeds either through all or through a certain unique combination of those nine main stages.

It also incorporates the Toynbee’s *Hellenic, Chinese, and Jewish models*, the Toynbee’s later stage “arrest” and “petrification” stages, as well as various Toynbee’s

patterns of societal disintegration (“two-and-a-half beat,” “three-and-a-half-beat,” “four-and-a-half beat,” “five-and-a-half beat”), etc. One of the main characteristics of such a model is its flexibility. While including all of the stages proposed by Danilevsky, Leontyev, Spengler, Toynbee, Quigley, and others, it encompasses virtually unlimited variations of the societal evolution. [Alalykin-Izvekov, 2011: 107–114]

## 4. Legacy

### 4.1. Danilevsky’s ideas and contemporary political discourse

Despite its obvious to a contemporary social scholar flaws, Danilevsky’s book has become a rather successful “piece of political prognostication and prophecy,” thus making a considerable impact on philosophy of history, political theory, and the field of the *comparative theory of civilizations*, among others. In many ways, it also tangibly influenced the external policies of the declining Russian Empire in its waning years.

*Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism* has interrupted the trajectory of Russia’s development along the path of *Slavophilism* and *Pan-Slavism*, and for most of the 20 century propelled it down the road of “class struggle” and “world revolution.” Yet, after 70 years of embracing those policies, Russia may be now returning to Danilevsky’s paradigm of multiple *local civilizations (cultural-historic types)* as opposed to the universal, global civilization, and choosing “every civilization for itself” policies and strategies.

Scholars agree that Danilevsky’s *opus magnum* has played, is playing, and is likely to continue playing an important role in Russian intellectual history. For example, Danilevsky’s ideas may have resumed their influence on the contemporary political discourse. Let us see if we can discern the overtones of Danilevsky’s ideas in the national and ethnic agenda of the Russian President Vladimir V. Putin:

The Russian experience of state development is unique. Ours is a multiethnic society; we are a united people. This makes our country complicated and multidimensional and gives us unique opportunities for development in many spheres. However, when a multiethnic society is infected with the virus of nationalism, it loses its strength and stability. We must understand the far-reaching consequences of indulging those who are trying to incite ethnic strife and hatred towards people of other cultures and faiths. ... The Russian people are state-builders, as evidenced by the existence of Russia. Their great mission is to unite and bind together a civilization. (...) This kind of civilizational identity is based on preserving the dominance of Russian culture, although this culture is represented not only by ethnic Russians, but by all the holders of this identity, regardless of their ethnicity. It is a kind of cultural code, which

has been attacked ever more often over the past few years; hostile forces have been trying to break it, and yet, it has survived. [Putin, 2012]

The echo of Danilevsky's ideas may be also heard in recent statements of the Russian foreign envoys. On February 12, 2021, the top Russian diplomat mentioned that Russia is ready to sever ties with the *European Union* if the bloc would impose new, economically painful sanctions. He added: "If you want peace, prepare for war." [Lavrov, 2021] That same week German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier noted that "energy ties are almost the last bridge between Russia and Europe." [BBC News, 2021] Stephen M. Woodburn correctly recapitulates:

(...) It is worth persisting with this text because of its important place in Russian intellectual history of the nineteenth century, and its impact on the thinking of a growing number of twenty-first-century readers. Danilevskii provides essential background for Russian Pan-Slavism and Eurasianism, the ideologies best poised to inform Russian policy over the next decades. This makes a case for calling Russia and Europe the most important nineteenth-century book for the post-Soviet period, and thus an object worthy of further study by specialist and non-specialist alike. [Woodburn, 2013: XXV]

#### 4.2. *What's next?*

Now, with our time machine soaring sky-high, let us take a view of the planet as a whole. We see that, presently, the world is in deep distress. Humanity is dealing with unprecedented challenges, which include overpopulation, resource depletion, and global warming [Targowski, 2009]. Starting in 2019, the world witnessed the *coronavirus pandemic COVID-19 pandemic* unleashing its terrific force on human communities, cities, and societies around the planet.

The pandemic has greatly amplified the already existing social, racial, ethnic, and economic disparities. Spurred by the pandemic, social tensions have ensued. [Alalykin-Izvekov, 2020; 2014]. The adequate and extensive sociocultural and socioeconomic reforms are needed to ensure the continuing viability of humanity as a whole. While Russia is "finding her roots," the *West*, not excluding its leading nation, the United States, may be experiencing a "midlife crisis" of its own. In the aftermath of *European Union Migrant Crisis (2014-Present)*, *Hurricane Katrina Calamity (2005)*, *Black Lives Matter Movement (2013-Present)*, *Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic (2019-Present)*, *Storming of the US Capitol by Insurrectionists (2021)*, *Texas Power Crisis (2021)*, *European Union Coronavirus COVID-19 Vaccination Debacle (2020-2021)*, it may

need to take a long and hard look at the civil, political, social, ethnic, racial, cultural, and human rights issues in its own realm.<sup>26</sup>

As our analysis demonstrates, the Russian and the Western elites may be finding ourselves in rather different mental *civilizational paradigms*, and therefore, operating in different *civilizational frameworks*. While the Western elites tend to think and act in the universe of the Fukuyamian “*End of History*” paradigm of the liberal “universal” and “global civilization,” the Russian upper classes are inclined to think and act in the framework of the Danilevsky-type, “pluralistic” world of the multiple “local civilizations” (“cultural-historic types”). As a result, the present level of the relations between the West and Russia is dangerously low. The obvious and reasonable foundation for balanced and mutually beneficial relations between Russia and the *West* may be something that both sides can agree on. Such a foundation exists. It is the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* together with other related documents, such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights*.

In his monograph on the origins and the evolution of the universal human rights, the American scholar Jack Donnelly postulates, “human rights have become a central, perhaps even defining, feature of our social and political reality. The vision of human dignity they reflect and seek to implement is accepted by almost all states as authoritative, whatever their deviations from these norms in practice.” [Donnelly, 2003: 61] The Universal Declaration and other UN documents enshrine the essential rights, values, and freedoms of all human beings. Created following the horrors of World War I and World War II, it was accepted by the General Assembly in Paris, France on December 10, 1948. The Universal Declaration model treats internationally recognized human rights holistically, as an indivisible structure in which the value of each right is significantly augmented by the presence of many others [Donnelly, 2003: 27].

The principal drafters of the Universal Declaration were representatives of many countries – Canada, France, USA, USSR, Lebanon, China, and Chile [Donnelly, 2003: 61]. All member states of the United Nations have either signed on in agreement with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* or ratified at least one of the nine binding treaties influenced by the Declaration, with the vast majority ratifying four or more.

<sup>26</sup> For history of problems with social, racial, and ethnic inequality in the *West* see, for example: Fredrickson, G. (2002). *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press; Haney Lopez, I. (2006). *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race*. New York and London: New York University Press; Montagu, A. (1964). *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. Cleveland and New York. The World Publishing Company; Whitman, J. (2017). *Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press; Wilkerson, I. (2020). *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. New York: Random House. (Author’s note).

Presently, all involved sides, including Russia and the *West*, could substantially benefit from carefully re-reading those fundamental documents, as well as actually acting on them.

### 5. America: A *Hero Path* or a *Social Anomie*?<sup>27</sup>

Together, we traversed a lot of geographical and temporal terrain. Presently, the clock is about to strike 12:00 noon on January 20, 2021, and we are finding ourselves within the select group of more than 1,000 guests spectacularly yet mindfully seated in a pandemic-conscious fashion around a specially designed inaugural platform at the west side of the Capitol Building. We see around us many familiar faces – former presidents and their families, Senate and House members, Supreme Court justices, as well as world-renown movie and stage celebrities. Being in the very midst of the nation’s and the world’s attention, Amanda continues with her prophetic and dynamic presentation:

We are striving to forge a union with purpose,  
to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and  
conditions of man.  
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us,  
but what stands before us.

In just a few moments Joseph R. Biden, Jr. will be sworn as the 46th president of the United States. In his address, the new *POTUS* will pledge to be a "president for all Americans" and outline a vision to “defeat the pandemic, build back better, and unify and heal the nation.” The challenges before the new leadership are enormous – reviving the economy, combating the climate change, restoring the multilateralism internationally, addressing immigration problems, and solving nation’s security troubles, both foreign and domestic. But, first and foremost – overcoming the pandemic. Just yesterday, on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, according to Johns Hopkins University health experts, the US coronavirus death toll has surpassed 400,000. And, it will continue to rise.

Yet, this nation had faced the enormous challenges before. Exactly 245 years ago, fifty-five men and one woman<sup>28</sup> signed an unprecedented document, which since then

<sup>27</sup> *Social anomie* – the condition of instability in a society, resulting from uprooting, breakdown, conflict, or lack of essential standards, values, beliefs, and ideals. From Greek word *anomos* – “lawless.” (Author’s note).

<sup>28</sup> Mary Katherine Goddard (1738–1816) – printer, newspaper editor and publisher, the postmaster of the city of Baltimore (1775–1789), and one of the signers of the *Declaration of Independence*. From her press, in January 1777, came the first printed copy of the *Declaration* with the names of the signers. Mary Katherine Goddard, like the majority of other signers, was a slave-owner. (Author’s note).

has become not only one of the most seminal pronouncements on the topic of the universal human rights, but also the engine of change throughout the world. Its second line boldly proclaimed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

That was of course, the *United States Declaration of Independence*, adopted by the *Second Continental Congress* meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1776. Those who signed it knew they were taking enormous risks. Less than a hundred miles from "The City of Brotherly Love" dozens of British naval ships with 22,000 British and German troops aboard have already swarmed the New York City harbor. The “Big Apple” was the “hinge” of the colonies, and the “red coats” have been preparing to ruthlessly squash the budding rebellion at its core. Subsequently, five signers were captured by the invaders as traitors, and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the revolutionary army, another had two sons captured. What followed this tumultuous beginning has been an incredible journey undertaken and enormous challenges overcome by this country and its people.

Amanda is now reciting the very last lines of her poem. In just 5 minutes and 723 words of an evocative cadence of her poetic verse, she managed not only to reflect on all 245 years of the nation’s eventful and complicated history, but also to reaffirm the redemptive power of the universal human ideals. And so, will this nation follow the path of wisdom and reconciliation with its past, or will it choose the road of strife and social unrest? As Amanda so wisely and eloquently expressing it now, it will depend on us. And so, let us listen:

(...) We will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.  
 We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west.  
 We will rise from the windswept northeast,  
 where our forefathers first realized revolution.  
 We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states.  
 We will rise from the sunbaked south.  
 We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.  
 And every known nook of our nation and every corner called our country,  
 our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,  
 battered and beautiful.  
 When day comes we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid,  
 the new dawn blooms as we free it.  
 For there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it.  
 If only we’re brave enough to be it.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The quoted verses are from the poem "The Hill We Climb" by Amanda S. C. Gorman (Author’s note).

## Conclusions

1. Nikolay Ya. Danilevsky is a major representative of the 19<sup>th</sup> century sociocultural, historiosophic, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic thought. His *magnum opus* “Russia and Europe” contains multiple layers of a thoroughly elaborated civilizational legacy. Among important sources for Danilevsky’s ideas are many seminal historic and contemporary theories, including such major schools of thought as *Pan-Slavism*, *Slavophilism*, *Pochvennichestvo*, and *Furierism*. There is a definite consensus among social scholars and thinkers, that Danilevsky has masterfully conflated, laboriously substantiated (correctly or not), and magnificently aggrandized the main ideas of *Pan-Slavism*, *Slavophilism* and related schools of thought, as well as “weaponized” them, thus creating a *Bismarckian-type* theory of a “hard-nosed” *Pan-Slavic* “realpolitik.”
2. However, as an attempt at great historiosophy, the work fails to meet the rigorous criteria of the contemporary scientific social research. The scrupulously elaborated by Danilevsky highly metaphoric historiosophic paradigm, though impressive, is ultimately incorrect. It offers, in his own words, an “artificial” theory of humanity’s historic evolution. As all metaphorical constructs, it can only “work” within certain limits and to a certain extent. It is not scholar’s fault since many important laws and regularities of the structure and the evolution of the sociocultural universe have been discovered only after his untimely demise in 1885. Despite its obvious to a contemporary social scholar flaws, Danilevsky’s book has become a rather successful “piece of political prognostication and prophecy,” thus making a considerable impact on philosophy of history, political theory, and the field of *the comparative theory of civilizations*, among others. In many ways, it also tangibly influenced the external policies of the declining Russian Empire in its waning years.
3. Danilevsky's book prefigured a number of theories of other prominent social scholars, essentially establishing the field of the *comparative theory of civilizations*. However, his and his followers models remained not only cyclical, which for the development of societies is essential correct (they are all finite), but unnecessarily rigid. Using the results of contemporary fundamental social research, we have developed a “universal” model of the sociohistoric evolution of societies. In it, we not only increased the number of stages, but also introduced a virtually unlimited amount of possible

variations. Since one of the main characteristics of our model is flexibility, it encompasses a virtually unlimited amount of variations of the societal evolution.

4. *Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism* has interrupted the trajectory of Russia's development along the path of *Slavophilism* and *Pan-Slavism*, and for most of the 20 century propelled it down the road of "class struggle" and "world revolution." Yet, after 70 years of embracing those ideologies and based on them policies, Russia may be now returning to Danilevsky's paradigm of multiple *local civilizations (cultural-historic types)* as opposed to the *universal, global civilization*, and choosing "every civilization for itself" policies and strategies. Scholars agree that Danilevsky's *opus magnum* has played, is playing, and is likely to continue playing an important role in Russian intellectual and sociopolitical history. Providing an essential basis for the *Russian Pan-Slavism and Eurasianism*, it may influence Russian ideological paradigms and policies for the decades to come.
5. At the same time the *West*, not excluding its leading nation, the United States, may be experiencing a "midlife crisis" of its own. In the aftermath of the *European Migrant Crisis (2014-Present)*, *Hurricane Katrina Calamity (2005)*, *Black Lives Matter Movement (2013-Present)*, *Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic (2019-Present)*, *Storming of the US Capitol by Insurrectionists (2021)*, *Texas Power Crisis (2021)*, and *European Union Coronavirus COVID-19 Vaccination Debacle (2020-2021)*, it may need to take a long and hard look at the civil, political, social, ethnic, racial, cultural, and human rights issues in its own realm. In particular, the US has to choose the path of wisdom and reconciliation with its past, versus the road of strife and social unrest.
6. As our analysis demonstrates, the Russian and the Western elites may be finding ourselves in rather different mental *civilizational paradigms*, and therefore, operating in different *civilizational frameworks*. While the Western elites tend to think and act in the universe of the *Fukuyamian "End of History"* paradigm of the liberal "universal" and "global civilization," the Russian upper classes are inclined to think and act in the framework of the Danilevsky-type, "pluralistic" world of the multiple "local civilizations" ("cultural-historic types"). As a result, the present level of the relations between the West and Russia is dangerously low. The obvious and reasonable

foundation for balanced and mutually beneficial relations between Russia and the *West* may be something that both sides can agree on. Such a foundation exists. It is the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* together with other related documents, such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights*.

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