

## RELIGION AS AN IDEOLOGICAL RESOURCE OF THE POST-SOVIET ELITE

*L.H. Dzahova, T.I. Malieva*

*North Ossetian state University. K.L. Khetagurov, Vladikavkaz, Russia*  
[science-almanac@mail.ru](mailto:science-almanac@mail.ru)

Significant transformations in the field of economics and politics dictate the need for an ideological reconstruction. In the history of Russia there are two ideas for integration function: Communist and monotheistic. The post-Soviet elite, faced with the problem of legitimizing their status, turned to religion as an ideological resource. Part of the elite oriented to the West, has made a choice in favor of religious individualism (Protestantism). This change is due to a desire to get rid of a collectivist worldview in favor of individualism, to remove the burden of responsibility. Protestantism, justifying the need for the individual to rely on their own resources, psychologically reinforced by the belief in their exclusivity, well-suited for this role. Ethno-national elite, on the contrary, asked the national religion. Turning from the general to the particular, the replacement of the principle of unity in diversity was triggered by the destruction and the weakening of state structures and relationships. Trying to give the status of a national religion and ideological braces dictated by political motives. The need to justify the tactical or strategic separatist aspirations. The ideological core of religion, ethnicity, serving imperious ethno-national elite can only be a principle of ethnocentrism. In the public debate it has been proposed as the idea of creating a synthetic religion – Development of religion, capable, supposedly, to remove religious differences and conflicts, to give impetus to the development of Russian society. In fact, synthetic religious structure is a way of abolishing the existing religions in the Russian space. Competition of different ideas in religion formation can make only the ideological and political projects at the state level, which aim to unite the members of society, regardless of their religious preferences.

**Key words:** political ideology, protestant, religious individualism, ethnic elite, cultural conservatism, ethnocentrism, religion development.

Post-Soviet elite, that came to power after collapse of the Soviet Union was faced with the problem of status legitimization, that is, getting objective justification for its right to rule and use the former state and public property. Significant transformations in the field of economics and politics have always entailed the need for ideological reconstruction.

Ideology is treated both in narrow and broad sense. In the first case ideology is identified with a political doctrine, designed to justify the claims for power of certain groups in the state. In this case, the interests of individual groups, due to ideologues' efforts, are resented as interests of the whole society. That is how political ideology always claim to the status of ideology in the broadest sense of the word, even if «no state or obligatory ideology in society» is fixed at the highest level by the law [2]. In this sense, ideology is seen as a set of higher system-specific values of the society, used to determine behavior of its members. The normal development of society requires a certain harmony of ideology and as a political doctrine, and valuable ideology, that bonds the society and determines its development. The peculiarity of Russia is that its culture «is formed as an inorganic (inhomogeneous) phenomenon and moves to the organic nature through a long evolution» [6, p. 61]. In this regard, now we can speak about a relative certainty of ideological circuits, only at unit level. Ideological formation on universal level is complicated by both internal and external factors.

The need for ideology at the state level has been proven differently. So, A.A. Zinovyev, known as a dissident and communism antagonist, when back to homeland, justified the necessity of ideology as «setting a common goal to the leaders of society» which, «regardless of its reachability or unreachability, plays an important organizing role and indicates the main ways to achieve it»,...«is the core of the entire social attitude system». Moreover the presence of ideology in society, as he states, «is imposed by the self-preservation interest» of a particular society [1].

In Russian History there were two ideas claiming to the role of people association: communist and monotheistic. In post-perestroika period the choice, under certain circumstances, is made in fa-

vor of monotheistic idea, the search of which is carried out, mainly in the «corridor» of anticommunism and Orthodoxchurchphobia.

The post-soviet elite, with its orientation to the West, made a bid for Protestantism, hoping to reform Orthodoxy by analogy with it [9]. However, the generalized experience of post-perestroika reality leads to the conclusion about unavailability of post-perestroika intellectual elite to be reformed. «... We are to understand that a simple transfer of foreign constitutions and value systems to Russian soil is simply impossible» [4, p. 407].

The Turning to Protestantism ideology of post-perestroika elite is not accidental. It is caused by axiological context – the desire to get rid of a collectivist worldview in favor of individualism. Protestantism, justifying the need for the individual to rely on his own resources, psychologically reinforced by the belief in their exclusivity, suited for this role well.

Post-perestroika elite also faced the need to justify their ownership of public wealth and its transfer into private hands. The Protestant ethic, as we know, announced wealth accumulation and capital increase as the direct responsibility of the owner. Further, such a characteristic of Protestantism as motivation to work should be noted. Tireless work for the glory of God replaces the love of neighbors and distant. Poverty is considered as a defect, as a consequence of laziness and lack of professionalism.

However, religious individualism, being the essence of Protestantism does not agree to Orthodoxy and the Soviet experience, that advocated the idea of equality and justice, using, of course, various arguments. Any process of development, as historical experience shows (eg, Japan), is based on the principle of continuity. It is difficult to compare basic provisions of the Protestant ethic with the paradigm of the future, the core of which is environmental imperative.

The post-perestroika elite is trying to use religion of the ancestors – polytheism (paganism), which is attractive for its «naturalness» as an ideological resource. After perestroika there appear revision historical theories of Rus' Christianization refuting Orthodoxy. So the author of «Русская история: новое прочтение», («Russian history: a new interpretation»), Doctor of Historical Sciences V.D. Solovey wrote that «Christian-pagan syncretism of the so-called «people orthodoxy» represented nothing more than thin amalgam of Christianity on the powerful, dominant formation of pagan folk psychology» [7, p.16].

The revival of a multi-ethnic religion as an ideological resource is a characteristic of ethno-national elite. The three reasons, we think, are a basis for the turn from the general to the particular, for the replacement of unity principle by diversity principle in the absence of ideological substrate binding.

First of all, it is destruction and weakening of state structures and ties. Before Perestroika the unifying substrat was maintained at the state level. The centripetal forces prevailed over centrifugal ones. There were a lot of common features: the idea of building a communist society, the general educational and cultural policy, the dominant sense of belonging to patrials of the country, and so on. After Perestroika the picture changes diametrically: centrifugal forces prevail over centripetal, diversity prevails over unity. This process was not spontaneous, but received a blessing from the center due to a number of reasons, mostly political. National Republics were seeking political sovereignty in accordance with the relative economic autonomy (the presence of oil, gas, etc.) They started to turn to «hoary antiquity» as to an ideological source, cutting off all the connections with the old Orthodox tradition.

Secondly, absolutisation of particular things and reduction of social contradictions to contradictions in the sphere of «mentality» were necessary in order to disavow the social and class nature of Perestroika. Thirdly, the attempt to give national religions the status of a ideological braces was dictated by pure political motives: the need to justify separatist aspirations (tactical or strategic), in the public mind or correct the «injustice» in the section of property and power. Only the principle of ethnocentrism can act as ideological core of ethnic religion, that is serving imperious ethno-national elite. «The great writing traditions – as A. Panarin wrote, – meet their purpose – bonding multi-breeding spaces – if they meet two criteria: distance from ethnocentrism and distance from political power, with all its ups and downs. ... This lack of distancing from the authorities has undermined

the roots of official orthodoxy in Russia. And what do we see today? Many denominations play the archaic role of «tribal religion», serving the power elite and practicing ethnocentrism and ideocracy principles (association of political and spiritual power [5].

Less common is the idea of building a kind of synthetic religion, uniting all the religions in Russian state. The purpose is twofold: a) to remove religious differences and conflicts; b) to give impetus to the movement of Russian society as the idea of Development takes the place of God in this project [3]. But it is doubtful whether such a synthesis can be considered to be a development rather than simplistic. Such a merging of existing religions into one synthetic structure would clearly lead to abolition of these religions.

A hidden premise of religious «innovation» is the opinion that the world's monotheistic religions have exhausted their resources. They think the biblical project, actively present around the twentieth century, ceased to exist. In the XXI century they are trying to find the contours of a new paradigm in the broadest sense of the word. It is clear, why A.Fursov – historian and political scientist, calls globalization «geohistorical terminator», who paves the way for new macro-entity. In his opinion, this terminator will be the one who solves the problem of creating new knowledge and a new ethic – «ethic of warriors and priests» [8]

Only state level ideological and political projects aiming to unite members of the society, regardless of their religious preferences are able to compete different ideas in the sphere of religion as ideological discourse. Traditional religions of our society and the government must work together to counter radicalization in the field of inter-religious relations.

#### References

1. *Zinoviev A.A.* Communism as a reality. Section ideology. URL: [http://www.ModernLib.ru> books / zinovev ... kommunizm\\_kak\\_realnost](http://www.ModernLib.ru/books/zinovev...kommunizm_kak_realnost).
2. The Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 13 <http://azdesign.ru/Projects/AZLibrCD/Law/Constn/KRF93/krf013.shtml>].
3. *Kurginyan S.E.* Esau and Jacob. The fate of Russia and in the world. Tom 1-2. (v.1), S.572 (v.2). Moscow, 2009
4. *Nikita Moiseev.* Path to the evidence. Parting with ease. M., 1998.
5. *Panarin A.S.* Splits and syntheses: Competition civilizational projects in Eurasia. URL: [http://www.archipelag.ru/authors/panarin\\_aleksandr/?library=1237/](http://www.archipelag.ru/authors/panarin_aleksandr/?library=1237/)
6. *Pastukhov V.B.* Russia's future grows out of the past // Polis. 1992. №5.
7. *Solovey V.D.* Russian history: a new reading. Moscow, 2005.
8. *Fursov A.* Russian authorities, Russian and Eurasia in the large cycles of history.URL: [http://www.zlev.ru> 125 / 125\\_11.htm /](http://www.zlev.ru/125/125_11.htm)
9. *Horos V.* Russian idea at a historic crossroads. Free Thought. 1992. No 6.

#### Литература

1. *Зиновьев А.А.* Коммунизм как реальность. Раздел Идеология. URL: [http://www.ModernLib.ru>books/zinovev...kommunizm\\_kak\\_realnost](http://www.ModernLib.ru/books/zinovev...kommunizm_kak_realnost).
2. Конституция РФ, Ст. 13. <http://azdesign.ru/Projects/AZLibrCD/Law/Constn/KRF93/krf013.shtml>].
3. *Кургинян С.Е.* Исав и Иаков. Судьба развития в России и мире. Том 1-2. С.642 (т.1), С. 572 (т.2). М., 2009
4. *Моисеев Никита.* Путь к очевидности. Расставание с простотой. М., 1998.
5. *Панарин А.С.* Расколы и синтезы: конкурс цивилизационных проектов в Евразии. URL: [http://www.archipelag.ru/authors/panarin\\_aleksandr/?library=1237/](http://www.archipelag.ru/authors/panarin_aleksandr/?library=1237/)
6. *Пастухов В.Б.* Будущее России вырастает из прошлого // Полис. 1992. №5.
7. *Соловей В.Д.* Русская история: новое прочтение. М., 2005.

8. *Фурсов А.* Русская власть, Россия и Евразия в больших циклах истории. URL: [http:// www.zlev.ru/125/125\\_11.htm/](http://www.zlev.ru/125/125_11.htm/)
9. *Хорос В.* Русская идея на историческом перекрестке. Свободная мысль, 1992, № 6.

***June, 1, 2016***

---