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## The Mobilization State as an Essential Characteristic of Russian Civilization: The Initial Stage of Formation

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**Abstract.** The local-civilizational approach, shared by the author of the article, assumes the existence of various “cultural-historical types” (In the words of his pioneer N.Ya. Danilevsky), which have different “logics of culture” and types of “collective cognitive unconscious” (according to A.V. Smirnov). These qualitative differences formed under the influence of special climatic and geographical conditions (habitat), as well as historical Challenges and the Answers found to them (according to A. Toynbee), found their expression in political and economic institutions, algorithms for responding to crises. One of such institutions for the Russian civilization was the phenomenon of the mobilization state, born as a spontaneous response to a historical challenge, mentally and institutionally fixed later (as a tested means of response). In this article, using the method of historical reconstruction, the author stops at the initial stage of the formation of this very specific manifestation of traditional Russian collectivism.

**Keywords:** Russian civilization, expansion of the West, mobilization state, Alexander Nevsky, Novgorod, reflection of the military threat

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## Theoretical provisions

In the process of secularization of Europe in the age of Enlightenment, a universalist version of the civilization theory was formulated as a new form of legitimization of the expansion of the West into other regions of the world: previously “sanctified” by proselytism, it began to be justified by the “familiarization” of barbarians with the benefits of civilization. According to the Hegelian formula of the philosophy of history, the “world spirit” could not be embodied in all peoples, but only in “world-historical” ones. In the second half of the XIX century an alternative view of the history of mankind appears as equally coexisting histories of the development of various cultural and historical types [1. P. 533–534], now called local civilizations.

While European philosophy stubbornly held (and still holds) to the idea of its own universality, placing other forms of thinking in the category of “non-philosophy” (theology, mysticism, etc.), “non-theory” (prototheory, protologics, etc.), according to modern Russian researchers, each of the local civilizations has its own the logic of culture and a special type of collective cognitive unconscious [2. P. 333].

These qualitative differences, formed under the influence of special climatic and geographical conditions, as well as historical experience, reflected in the language, affected, among other things, political and economic institutions formed on the basis of stable algorithms for responding to crisis situations and consolidated thanks to successfully found Answers to certain historical Challenges [3].

By and large, Russia is a country that should not exist based on the principles of Western expediency. There are many reasons for this: harsh economic conditions, small surplus product, boundless expanses, the need to repel military aggression along a large perimeter of borders. The way of survival of the Russians and the peoples connected with them by the general political structure for many centuries was the mobilization state, which was the organizing force for the accomplishment of various kinds of great deeds, first of all, a feat of arms. Another feature, also due to the harsh climate, was a collective, rather than an individualistic form of labor organization, due to the short growing season, which forced joint efforts (community, artel, collective farm). The third feature was formed in the process of expanding the Russian civilizational space, which occurred through the gradual inclusion of other ethnic groups, provided they accept the archetypal model of service to the Motherland. Moreover, Russian history is full of contrasts, when the

same ethnic or cultural groups, which, with the weakening of the state and/or the loss of the “sacred vertical” (according to V.L. Tsymbursky, which is the core element of civilization [4]), posed a threat to it, with opposite tendencies, performed protective functions.

Many (but by no means all) features of Russian civilization are explained by the influence of Orthodoxy, as well as the historical experience of its development, analyzed in detail in 1930 by G.N.M. Nikolsky [5] (similar to how M. Weber identified the relationship between the “spirit of capitalism” and Protestant ethics). A separate extremely difficult issue is the dogmatic differences between Catholicism and Protestantism from Orthodoxy, their relationship with European rationalism, as well as the lack of hierarchy in Orthodoxy and its irrationalism, deeply researched from a scientific and historical point of view by N.Y. Danilevsky [1. P. 209–230], from theological positions — by A.S. Khomyakov [6. P. 25–243]. These differences were further developed in classical Eurasianism through the category of a multi-ethnic nation, based on the concepts of conciliarity and a symphonic personality, as well as the ideas of dementia as a direct democracy as opposed to representative democracy, the power or real possession of the right and its implementation in action without the division into objective and subjective law characteristic of the Western tradition, the justification of the right or absence of a conflict of law and justice, etc. [2. P. 403–406]. The logic of the culture of Russian civilization was defined by V.V. Kozhinov (based on the works of M.M. Bakhtin) as dialogical (as opposed to Hegelian monologue), and the line of succession was designated by Vadim Valeryanovich from the “smart prayer” of Nil Sorsky, through the work of many Russian writers (especially F.M. Dostoevsky), up to Bakhtin himself [7]. The dialogical logic of culture does not exclude the Other, giving him the opportunity of an equal voice, while the monological, especially vividly manifested in the opposition “Others and the West” considers all collective subjects, the cat. it cannot be attributed to the West as objects of the application of its forces.

On the basis of the sector of philosophical problems of politics of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in contrast to the concept of “nation-state”, the concept of “state-civilization” or “civilizational state”, that is being developed by Chinese [8] and Indian [9] colleagues are also actively developing abroad. For the Eastern tradition, there is no characteristic Western antagonism between the state and society. For example, the Chinese regard the state as a virtue [10. P. 34]. The coming approval of the concept of the state-

civilization becomes more and more obvious as research develops (including in the West [11]).

One of the historical problems in the development of Russian civilization is the proximity of Europe, intensive contacts with which led to the adoption of European consumer standards by representatives of the ruling class, undermining the authentic form of the service state, in which each estate had to perform a fair share of duties. The initial stage of the aggravation of the conflict between the new (emerging) model of the mobilization state and the former perception of the prince and his squad as military mercenaries is associated with episodes when the Novgorod merchants in moments of danger called for a “strong” prince in the person of Alexander Nevsky, and when the external threat weakened, they began to be burdened by his power.

### **Political situation**

The favorable geographical position of Novgorod contributed to the development of foreign trade, which was the business not only of merchants, but also of the boyars, who, being involved in the fur trade, had great economic strength and corporate cohesion. The remoteness from Kiev, the widest connections with dozens of countries (Byzantium, Volga Bulgaria, the Caspian countries, Gotland and the entire Southern Baltic states), the riches of the Novgorod land strengthened the tendencies of independence. Up to the XIII century, until German knightly orders appeared at the borders of the Novgorod land, Novgorod did not know the constant threat of external danger, and the military reserves of the boyars could be spent exclusively on the protection of trade caravans, thousand-mile routes and remote trading posts-churchyards [12. P. 424–426].

Throughout the XI century, the Novgorod boyars showed their will many times in relation to the grand dukes and those princes-vicekings, the king of Kiev sent it to Novgorod. In the last quarter of the XI century, the chronicle formula about the beginning of the reign of a new prince changed significantly. Previously mentioned: the Grand Duke of Kiev “placed” the Prince in Novgorod. Then they began to write: Novgorodians “introduced” the prince to themselves. The chronicle is full of phrases: “the prince ran away”, Novgorodians “kick out the prince”, “show the way” to the prince [12. P. 427–428].

Based on the pre—revolutionary [13; 14; 15; 16; 17] and modern [18] sources, we will restore the chronicle of some events of the XIII century on the western

borders of Russia<sup>1</sup>, when, under the influence of external factors, the above trend began to change to the exact opposite, bearing in mind that they occurred immediately after the invasion of Batu. The vassal dependence [18. P. 179] of the Russian lands could not be overcome militarily for a long time. Novgorod, unlike other Russian territories that remained undisturbed, received at this time new grounds for realizing its exclusivity, while simultaneously becoming a laconic prey for Western neighbors who understood that ruined Russia would no longer be able to provide the former military force to protect the western outskirts [13. P. 280–281; 14. P. 643–645; 15. P. 164; 17. P. 57–58].

### Chronicle of events

In 1240, Alexander Yaroslavovich's swift victory took place over an army that had been gathering in Sweden for more than two years and performed under the leadership of Jarl Birger, which brought him the glory of Nevsky. After returning to Novgorod, Alexander tried to encourage the Novgorod elite to take a firmer position against the Livonian Order, but the Novgorod boyars, led by the *posadnik* Stepan Tverdislavich, did not support the young prince, and that winter he left with his family and court to Pereyaslavl.

Meanwhile, through the efforts of the pro-German party of the Pskov boyars (whose “child” was taken hostage), the Germans entered the lands of Pskov, and then advanced further, gradually approaching Novgorod. In view of the impending danger, the Novgorodians began to ask for a prince from Grand Duke Yaroslav, although they had previously been burdened with strong princely power and tried to get rid of it at the slightest infringement of their interests and the disappearance of an external threat. Yaroslav agreed, but he did not send Alexander to them, but his son Andrei, who could not reverse the situation: the Germans were also joined by the daring raids of the Chudis and Lithuanian tribes. As a result, people, horses, cattle were taken away, which made it impossible to cultivate the land and famine was fraught. In these circumstances, the Novgorod bishop Spiridon himself “with the forefathers” travel to Vladimir to Yaroslav, begging to let Alexander go to them for the reign [16. P. 37].

Alexander and his “court” urgently arrived at St. Sophia. An army of Novgorodians, Izhorians, Ladozhans, Karelians immediately gathered, which,

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<sup>1</sup> We will rely only on firmly established facts, omitting discussions between experts about certain nuances of several controversial moments of Russian history.

marching under the banners of the prince, soon occupied Koporye, capturing many Germans. Later, Alexander freed most of the captured knights, brought only a few with him to Novgorod and was merciful, but severely punished the traitors Vozha and Chud'.

After that, he went to his father, took the Suzdal regiments from him and returned to Novgorod with his brother Andrey; then Alexander announced a campaign against the Germans, who boasted of “reproaching the Slovenian language” and, without wasting time waiting for the collection of the Novgorod army, hurried to occupy all the roads leading to Pskov. Nevsky appeared under its walls before the opponents, caught off guard, could get information about his fees. The city was liberated, the German governors went chained to Novgorod, and six of the main Pskov traitors were executed. Following this, Alexander invaded the possessions of the Livonian knights adjacent to Pskov, defeating their troops.

The Teutonic knights were stunned by the sudden loss of Pskov and urgently began to assemble a militia, with the intention of ending Alexander once and for all. The result of the confrontation was summed up during the battle on April 5, 1242 on the ice of Chudskoe Lake.

In the summer of 1242, having learned about the raids of the Lithuanians, Alexander went out to meet the enemy, as always, compensating for the small number of his troops with speed and military skill. In one campaign, Alexander himself, more than once in danger, scattered up to seven enemy detachments with his army, beat many Lithuanian princes. After such a blow, the Lithuanians did not bother the prince for more than two years, during which he lived relatively quietly in Novgorod. But in 1245 they recovered and again began to make raids, burned the surroundings of Torzhok and Bezhetsk and occupied Toropets. Alexander, as before, approached the city with lightning speed, recaptured it from the Lithuanians, many of whom were killed. The Novgorodians, pleased with the victory, did not want to continue the campaign, but the prince wisely reasoned that it was impossible to leave the opportunity for the restless enemy to gather forces in the future. With one of his squad, he overtook and defeated the Lithuanians at Lake Gizza. After a short respite in Vitebsk (at his father-in-law's), Alexander met the enemy forces near Usvyat and defeated them again. This series of retaliatory attacks led to the fact that the Lithuanians did not dare to appear in his lands for several years.

Soon an extraordinary embassy from Pope Innocent IV arrived in Novgorod — the noblest nobles, Cardinals Gold and Gement, with a letter dated February 8, 1248, in which the Pope insisted on the conversion of Alexander and his people

to Catholicism, claiming that the late Yaroslav promised this to his ambassador de Plano Carpini before his death in Tartary<sup>2</sup>. The cardinals, having handed over the message, began to persuade the prince to renounce Orthodoxy, assuring that in this way he would be able to get the support of Western sovereigns in the fight against the eastern hordes, but were refused.

In Rome, after receiving Alexander's negative response, a new campaign began to organize hostile actions against the Russian land, involving its neighbors in the coalition. In 1253, Innocent IV sent an order to the bishops and clergy of Livonia to preach a new crusade. In the same year, the knights approached Pskov, but were courageously repulsed by its inhabitants and hastily retreated after learning that the army of Novgorodians under the leadership of Vasily, the son of Alexander Nevsky, was approaching. The Novgorodians came to the mouth of the river Narva, entered the German possessions located here and devastated them, and the Pskov chased the retreating Germans, forced them into battle and finally defeated them. The warlike knights were forced to ask for peace, renouncing all conquests in the Russian lands.

In addition to the Germans, the Catholic clergy set up Mindovg, the unifier of the Lithuanian tribes, against Russia. Back in 1235, he captured the Russian city of Novogrudok, strengthened his power by converting to Catholicism, considering it advantageous to enlist the support of the pope (since he was strongly pressed by German knights), and received a royal crown as a reward<sup>3</sup>. Gradually, Mindovg seized the fragmented estates of the princes of Polotsk and replaced Alexander's father-in-law (Brechislav) with his nephew Tevtivil. In 1252, during Alexander Nevsky's trip to the Horde to represent Sartak, Mindovg went to conquer the Smolensk land, while his detachments began to devastate the Novgorod possessions. Vasily, Alexander's son, who was in Novgorod at that time, despite his extreme youth, opposed the Lithuanians under the leadership of experienced boyars, heroically fought with them and completely defeated them, pacifying them for a while.

But the Novgorodians could not even get along with Alexander Nevsky's son, and in 1255 he had to leave them for Torzhok. Vasily Tatishchev writes that "novogorodtsy are taken from Pskov... Yaroslav Yaroslavich of Tver and put him on the throne at home in Novegrad, and Prince Vasily Alexandrovich ...

<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Franciscan, describing the death of Yaroslav, did not say a word about this promise.

<sup>3</sup> Later, realizing the real consequences of Western expansion, which caused the anti-German uprising of Lithuanian tribes, Mindovg returned to paganism and teamed up with Alexander Nevsky against the German knights.



kicked out of Novagorod” [16. P. 50]. Learning of this, Alexander sent his troops to Novgorod, intending, however, to humble him without bloodshed. Approaching the city, the prince demanded the extradition of the governor of Anania, in his opinion, the main culprit of the misunderstanding; however, Ananias turned out to have a strong party that did not want to give him away, and Alexander, condescending to the requests of the residents, was content only with removing Ananias from the post of *posadnik*.

A year later, the Swedes, in alliance with the Danes, gathered large forces under the influence of the pope and began to build a fortress near the mouth of Narva. Novgorodians urgently began to gather their troops and asked Alexander to come to their aid. After learning about this, the Swedes, leaving the fortress unfinished, immediately retreated. But Alexander, having arrived with all his regiments in Novgorod, ordered to march immediately, despite the harsh winter. The prince hid the purpose of the campaign, probably because of his unwillingness to prove its validity to the Novgorod elite. When the army reached *Koporye*, the prince announced a campaign to Finland, where from 1242 the Swedes began to assert themselves, building the *Tavastgus* castle. Having passed through Finland “from edge to edge”, Alexander achieved that the Swedes dared to start hostile actions against the Russian lands again only thirty-seven years later.

Russian Russians returned from this difficult campaign, in 1257 Alexander went to the Horde, where great changes took place: Sartak was killed by his uncle Berke, who declared himself the successor of the deceased Batu, and entrusted the Russian land to his nobleman *Ulavchiy*, who was going to send a detachment of Tatars to the Russian lands to collect tribute and compile a census. Russian Russian princes managed to conclude a very significant agreement in the Horde — the internal management of affairs in the Russian land and the right to wage war and make peace was left to the Russian princes. But Alexander failed to reject the arrival of Tatar officials in the *Suzdal*, *Ryazan* and *Murom* lands. Soon the prince had to go to *Ulavchiy* again, because he demanded that the Novgorodians also pay tribute. Alexander was forced to go to Novgorod with the Tatars himself in order to prevent a conflict, the consequence of which would inevitably be the second invasion of the Horde into Russia. The news of this reached Novgorod, a mutiny broke out in the city. When Alexander arrived with the ambassadors, the Novgorodians, handing gifts to the ambassadors, announced that they did not want to obey the khan and pay tribute. Foreseeing the terrible revenge of the Tatars, which threatened to fall first of all not on Novgorod, but on the lands lying on the way to it, Alexander, reluctantly, severely punished himself the



instigators of the rebellion, the main ones — by cutting off a hand, depriving the eyes and other body parts. The prince resorted to these punishments, which were unusual for Russian customs, to convince the Tatars, if necessary, that the perpetrators were immediately punished. And, indeed, the khan was content with his explanation and notification that the Novgorodians had submitted. Only two officials with their families and henchmen came to Novgorod to take the census and collect tribute. Soon the Novgorodians were outraged again, and the frightened Khan's envoys began to ask Alexander for protection. He immediately put guards on them, but the riots did not subside. Then the prince resorted to the last resort — he left the city together with the khan's envoys and announced that he was betraying him to the wrath of the khan, and he himself was leaving for Vladimir forever, as a result of which the scribes were accepted. After their departure, Alexander also left Novgorod, leaving his son Dimitri to reign.

### **Conclusions**

Today, when the Russian Federation finds itself in a situation of confrontation with the collective West, familiar from a historical point of view, it is necessary to recall the origins of the model of state structure that was once formed and has been tested by time.

The problem of retaining territory has been consistently relevant throughout Russian history. Russia, in fact, expanded along the perimeter to ensure internal peace. A defense-capable state, performing regulatory functions whenever possible, helped to resist the external threat. They included, among other things, the feasible participation of various lands in solving national problems, which could be perceived by part of the local elite as infringement of their interests.

On the example of the relationship between Alexander Nevsky and the Novgorod elite, we conclude: 1) that the boyars (relying on the experience of protecting exclusively personal interests — the protection of caravans, etc.) take for granted the help of regiments from other Russian lands to repel an external threat, but do not want to bear the general burdens of tributary, which cannot yet be overcome by military means, and 2) how was the beginning of the gradual overcoming of this tradition.

The constant existence in the “challenge-response” mode has led to the rooting of the model of the mobilization state as an essential characteristic of Russian civilization. Subsequent publications will reflect later historical episodes of the consolidation of this institution, to deeply realize the fact that in the current

political situation, the Russian political elite has every reason to turn to time-tested algorithms for solving foreign policy problems.

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# Мобилизационное государство как сущностная характеристика российской цивилизации: начальный этап формирования

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**Аннотация.** Локально-цивилизационный подход, разделяемый автором статьи, предполагает существование различных «культурно-исторических типов» (говоря словами его пионера Н.Я. Данилевского), обладающих различными «логиками культуры» и типами «коллективно-когнитивного бессознательного» (по А.В. Смирнову). Эти качественные отличия, сформировавшиеся под влиянием особой среды обитания, а также исторических Вызовов и найденных на них Ответов (по А. Тойнби), нашли свое выражение в политических и экономических институтах, выросших из проверенных временем алгоритмов выхода из кризисных ситуаций. Одним из таких институтов для российской цивилизации стал феномен мобилизационного государства, рожденный как стихийный ответ на выпавшие на ее долю испытания, ментально и институционально закрепленный впоследствии (в качестве испытанного средства реагирования). В данной статье (после перечисления ключевых отличий российской цивилизации) автор, используя метод исторической реконструкции, останавливается на начальном этапе формирования данного, весьма специфического, проявления традиционной российской соборности.

**Ключевые слова:** российская цивилизация, экспансия Запада, мобилизационное государство, Александр Невский, Новгород, отражение военной угрозы

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