

If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget its skill! (Psalm 137:5)

The book is dedicated to the city of Jerusalem, Israel,
my true motherland,
where I have spent the greater part of my life.

Table of Contents

Introduction: Russian Ideational Roots of the Jewish Enlightenment and Hebrew Literature	1
Part I: The Russian Roots of the National Ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment and Zionist Movements in the Russian Empire: Y. L. Gordon, Peretz Smolenskin, Y. L. Pinsker, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda	5
Chapter 1: Roots of the National Ideas of the Haskalah in the Russian Empire	6
1.1. Introduction	6
1.2. The Awakening of National Movements in Eastern Europe and in the Russian Empire	6
1.3. National Ideas in the Wake of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and in Russia	8
1.4. The “Lovers of Wisdom” (Lyubomudry) Movement in Russia	9
1.5. The Slavophile Movement, the Russian “Soul,” A. A. Khomiakov	10
1.6. The Slavophiles, Peter the Great, and the Russian Orthodox Church	13
1.7. The Intellectual Circles of A. N. Ostrovsky and A. A. Grigoryev	14
1.8. The Russian “Soil” Movement	15
1.9. The Nationalistic Movements of Poles and Other Ethnic Minorities	16
1.10. Summary	18
Chapter 2: The Development of Jewish Nationalist Consciousness as Reflected in Scholarly Literature	19
2.1. European Nationalist Tendencies as the Background of Jewish National Awakening: Peretz Smolenskin, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, Y. L. Pinsker	19
2.2. Jews as Seen by the Slavophiles	21
2.3. Alienation between the Russians and the Jews after the Pogroms of the 1880s	23

Chapter 3: A Comparison of the Views of Y. L. Gordon and Russian Thinkers	25
3.1. Y. L. Gordon as a Leading Figure of the Haskalah and His National Views	25
3.2. "A Flask of Feuilletons", by Y. L. Gordon	26
3.3. The Jewish National Question in Y. L. Gordon's View	28
3.4. Parallels between the National Ideas of the Haskalah and Those of the Nationalist Movements in Russia	29
3.5. The Uniqueness of the Russian People and of the Jewish People: Parallel Concepts	30
3.6. The Soul of the Nation Is Concealed and Unknowable to Foreigners	34
3.7. The National Pride That Our People Feel Due to Their Spiritual Power and Moral Strength	36
3.8. Foreigners—a Factor Causing Lack of Understanding between Peoples	36
3.9. Other Nations' Lack of Understanding Towards Us Leads, in the Final Analysis, to Animosity	40
3.10. The Role of the Russians and of the Jews in Creating Negative Images in the Eyes of Foreign Nations	41
3.11. The Blind Wish to Imitate Everything Foreign, Both in Russian Society and among the Jewish Public	44
3.12. The Need to Preserve the Authentic National Language and to Develop It as a Basic Component of Nationalism	46
3.13. The Disaster of the Tower of Babel Confronts Every Nation That Foregoes the Preservation of Its Original National Language	48
3.14. The Need to Adopt the Accomplishments and Wisdom of Other Nations for the Benefit of Our People and to Advance Our National Goals	49
3.15. "Our People is Unable to Close the Gaps as Quickly as We Hoped"	52
3.16. Seeking the Proper Balance between the National and the Universal Dimension	53
3.17. Criticism of the Conservative Elements within Our People Who Are Not Prepared to Progress towards Enlightened Europe	55
3.18. Summary	56

Chapter 4: A Comparison between the National Views of Y. L. Pinsker and Those of Petr Chaadayev, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Vyacheslav Ivanov	57
4.1. L. S. Pinsker and His National Aspirations	57
4.2. Geography as the Most Important Factor in the Development of the Every Nation	57
4.3. The Degradation of Every People without a Clear National Agenda in the Eyes of Other Peoples	59
4.4. A Lack of a Solid Cultural Basis Related to the Lack of a National Agenda	60
4.5. The Place of a Nation among Other Nations	61
4.6. The Recognition of a Nation among Other Nations	63
4.7. The Weakness of National Consciousness in Different Peoples	63
4.8. A Nation's Lack of Self-Respect	63
4.9. False Expectations of a Miracle: Passivity, Nonintervention in Politics, and Subjection to the Influence of Others	64
4.10. Nikolai Berdyaev on the National Rights of the Russians and the Jews	66
4.11. Ways of National Revival	67
4.12. Conclusion: the Worldview of Chaadayev, Khomiakov, and the Slavophiles Versus that of Pinsker	69
Part II: Russian Ideational Influences as Expressed in Hebrew Literary Works	71
Chapter 5: The Russian Theological Novel and Its Ideological Incarnation in Hebrew Literature	72
5.1. The Primary Genres of the Novel in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Russian Literature	72
5.2. The Theological Novel in Russian Literature of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries	73
5.3. The Theological Novel in Comparison to the Ideological Novel in Hebrew Literature	77
5.4. The Theological Novella in Hebrew Literature: Chayyim Hazaz's <i>Shemuel Frankfurter</i>	78
5.5. The Ideological Elements in Hebrew Prose of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries	80

5.6. The Tendency to Replace Theological Motifs with Ideological Motifs in Hebrew Poetry	82
5.7. The Ideological Novel in Russian and Hebrew Literatures during the First Half of the Twentieth Century	85
5.8. Summary	88
Chapter 6: The Epic Poem <i>Songs of Glory</i> by Naphtali Herz Wessely	90
Introduction: The Unintended Parody Effect Produced by the Mixture of Literary Depictions and Religious Pathos	90
6.1. Generic Aspects of <i>Songs of Glory</i>	91
6.2. Violation of Generic Rules in <i>Songs of Glory</i>	94
6.3. Plot in Epic and in <i>Songs of Glory</i>	94
6.4. The Depiction of the Protagonist in the Epic and in <i>Songs of Glory</i>	95
6.5. The Figure of the Author and the Presentation of Chronological Order in Epic and in <i>Songs of Glory</i>	96
6.6. Epic and Dramatization	98
6.7. The Representation of Time in Epic	100
6.8. Epic and <i>Songs of Glory</i> : Between Pathos and Parody	101
6.9. Summary	104
Bibliography	106
Index	118

Introduction: Russian Ideational Roots of the Jewish Enlightenment and Hebrew Literature

Until now, there have been a number of studies dealing with the affinity of Hebrew literature to Russian and European literatures from the point of view of style and the way of structuring the narrative, but there have been few studies dealing with the affinity of Jewish Enlightenment and Hebrew literature to Russian and European literatures from the point of view of ideas. This book reveals, for the first time, the ideational influence of Russian thought of the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century on the Jewish intellectual world in the Russian Empire as expressed in Jewish Enlightenment literature and later Hebrew literature. Until now it was believed that Jewish Enlightenment literature and Hebrew literature only adopted some external, but not inherent, features of Russian culture, such as poetic styles in literary works, literary genres, and types of polemics. In this book, I point to the conceptual ideas adopted by the Jewish thinkers and writers familiar with Russian philosophy and literature. I provide examples from the writings of Y. L. Gordon,¹ Peretz Smolenskin,² Y. L. Pinsker,³ N. H.

-
- 1 Yehuda Leib Gordon (1830–1892) was one of the most important Hebrew poets and publicists of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) movement.
 - 2 Peretz Smolenskin (1842–1885) was a Zionist publicist and Hebrew writer in Russia, an active proponent of Jewish nationalism, interested in schemes for the colonization of Palestine. His Hebrew periodical, *The Dawn* (Ha-Shachar) was highly influential in these spheres.
 - 3 Yehuda Leib Pinsker (1821–1891), was a Russian Jew, a physician, a Zionist pioneer and activist, and the founder and leader of the Chovevei Zion movement, also known as Chibbat Zion. He authored the famous pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation*, subtitled “Warning to His Fellow People, from a Russian Jew” (Mahnruf an seine Stammgenossen, von einem russischen Juden, 1882), in which he urged the Jewish people to strive for independence and national consciousness.

Wessely,⁴ Y. Ch. Brenner,⁵ Ch. N. Bialik,⁶ Ya. Shteinberg,⁷ Y. D. Berkowitz,⁸ and Ch. Hazaz.⁹

The book consists of two parts. The first part is titled “The Russian Roots of the National Ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment and Zionist Movements in the Russian Empire.” This section deals with the concept of national identity as it was understood in various intellectual and social circles in Eastern Europe from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In this period, a sense of national consciousness developed in various parts of Eastern Europe, where movements for national liberation began to emerge. The Jewish Enlightenment shared a number of spiritual characteristics with movements that sought their national identity in Russia and Eastern Europe. In the four chapters in this part of the book, I show that there are clear ideational parallels between the approaches to national issues among figures of the Jewish Enlightenment and those of Russian nationalist movements.

The second part is titled “Russian Ideational Influences as Expressed in Hebrew Literary Works.” The writers of Hebrew literature had a deeply respectful attitude to their religion. Judaism for them was the rock from which they were hewn and from which it was strictly forbidden to stray. While in other literatures writers sought “the righteous God” according to their understanding, speculated about the question of whether God really existed and what kind of God it was, the Jewish writers recoiled from such questions. For the Jewish writers, the answers to these and all other potential theological questions were already given in the traditional Jewish religious literature, and it was not fitting for them to desecrate the holy by raising heretical questions of this kind.

On the one hand, Jewish thinkers and writers wanted to be faithful to the Jewish religion and were not emotionally able, nor did they wish, to break

4 Naphtali Herz Wessely (Hartwig, 1725–1805) was a Haskalah poet, linguist, and exegete.

5 Yosef Chayyim Brenner (1881–1921) was a Russian-born Hebrew writer and essayist, one of the founders of the modern Hebrew literature.

6 Chayyim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934) was a Jewish poet, writer, essayist, translator, and editor, who wrote both in Hebrew and in Yiddish. Bialik was one of the pioneers of modern Hebrew poetry.

7 Yaakov Shteinberg (1887–1947) was a Ukrainian-born Hebrew poet and writer.

8 Yizhak Dov Berkowitz (1885–1967) was a Russian-born Hebrew writer and translator from Yiddish into Hebrew.

9 Chayyim Hazaz (1898–1973) was a Ukrainian-born Hebrew writer and essayist. There are many more examples of Russian influence on Hebrew literature not mentioned in the present work. See Dan Miron, ed., *Ha-chayyim be-apo shel ha-netzach: Yetzirato shel Uri Nisan Gnesin—chamisha machzorei yiyunim* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1997).

away from it. On the other, they learned from Russian thought and literature and sought to imitate them; they wanted to graze in foreign pastures and write literature of great moral and intellectual worth, like foreign literatures, and especially Russian. For that reason their attitude to Judaism was to some degree ambivalent. Adherence and fidelity to the Jewish religion limited the Jewish writers in absorbing the ideas and ways of writing accepted in foreign literatures. When the Jewish writers wrote about Judaism, their relationship was to a great extent Freudian. On the one hand, their devotion to the Jewish religion prevented them from developing a literature like other peoples, but on the other hand it was precisely their devotion to the Jewish religion that enabled them to develop a special literature, a Jewish literature of their own.

As I show in the first chapter in this section of the book, "The Russian Theological Novel and Its Ideological Incarnation in Hebrew Literature," Jewish writers created their national literature by focusing on spheres other than religion. While the authors of the Russian novels seek "the true God," in modern Hebrew literature, the authors pursue strategical and tactical objectives in the personal, cultural, social, or national realm, as against the theological realm. I assert, and bring proof, that, within the realm of Hebrew culture, which is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, there is no place for the theological novel such as existed in Russian literature. Instead, the ideological novel developed, vigorous grew, and was widely accepted.

An example of profuse borrowings from foreign literature is given in the second chapter in this section of the book, which is titled "The Epic Poem Songs of Glory by Naphtali Herz Wessely." In this chapter I show that this poem presents a confused and inconsistent mixture of elements from various genres and styles, giving the effect of a parody, of course unintended by the author. At the same time, the writer shows great devotion to the Jewish tradition and religious enthusiasm, which seems grotesque in this epic poem.

In the final analysis, one can say that the thinkers of the Haskalah movement, the writers of the period of the Haskalah and of the later Hebrew literature were deeply influenced by Russian philosophical and religious thought even when unaware of it. They adopted ideational features of the Russian literature and incorporated them into their Hebrew works.

Part I: The Russian Roots of the National Ideas of the Jewish
Enlightenment and Zionist Movements in the Russian Empire:
Y. L. Gordon, Peretz Smolenskin, Y. L. Pinsker, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda

Chapter 1: Roots of the National Ideas of the Haskalah in the Russian Empire

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter I shall discuss the roots of awakening of national conscience in Eastern Europe. I shall address the concept of national identity as it was commonly understood in various intellectual and social circles in Eastern Europe from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. During this period, a sense of national consciousness developed in the various states and areas of Eastern Europe, thanks to which the initial stirrings of the movements for national liberation began to emerge.¹

1.2. The Awakening of National Movements in Eastern Europe and in the Russian Empire

Various peoples, and particularly the numerous ethnic minority groups within Eastern Europe, began to define the nature of their unique national identity from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In light of these theoretical discussions, they attempted to realize in practice their political and cultural autonomy. The subject of national identity also received greater weight among central intellectual and social groups, as compared to other values—such as religion and its institutions, monarchy, tradition, and arts—which had previously stood at the head of the scale of values in these societies. Such values were no longer considered absolute and primary criteria of spiritual and social life, but were examined and evaluated anew, from a nationalist viewpoint. Whereas the practical manner of realizing these moods in a well-formulated theory of national identity varied from one ethnic group to another, the phenomena as such, with its basic principles, was shared by most of the groups. I intend to discuss the nationalist tendencies in Russia during the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century, which served as the background for similar tendencies in Jewish society and culture.

1 Jan Kozik, *The Ukrainian National Movement in Galicia: 1815–1849*, ed. and introd. Lawrence D. Orton (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1986), 6–9.

The awakening of interest in unique Russian national identity finds striking expression in Russian journalism throughout the nineteenth century. While the first kernels of ideas related to Russian national identity already appeared even before the Romantic period, their development is only recognizable later, during the Romantic period in Europe, at the end of the eighteenth century and thereafter. These ideas left their impression upon literature as well as other areas of social thought and philosophy. The Romantics laid the cornerstones for studying the culture of nations, thereby paving the way for a widely accepted understanding of national identity; at times, they also expressed their own national uniqueness and promoted the idea of national liberation. The spread of Romantic ideas was thus closely involved with the awakening of the movements for national liberation in Europe.

The dissemination of ideas originating in the Romantic movement received a new growth within the national movements of Eastern Europe and Russia. The tendency to emphasize the uniqueness of national and ethnic cultures, and in doing so to affirm the uniqueness and independence of the various ethnic groups, naturally led to a new perception of national and ethnic history and folklore as valuable sources of national culture.²

Such an approach attributes a unique singularity to the fate and function of each nation.³ The components of culture—philosophy, belles-lettres, journalism—became further sources for studying the “spirit of the nation.” The progress of nations and their achievements in various areas were understood as interwoven with their consciousness of their unique national identity.

There are two aspects to the study of national identity: the social-class aspect, and the historical aspect. In terms of the former, the lower classes were perceived as the storehouse of national uniqueness. From the historical aspect, the past was understood as the period during which the unique national spirit flourished and in which it was embodied.⁴

The interest in national identity among the broad Russian public arose, to a large extent, in wake of the war with Napoleon’s armies and their defeat in 1812. For instance, Russian literature after this war became very involved in the ideological process of seeking out the roots of Russian national identity.⁵

2 Olga Litvak, *Haskalah: The Romantic Movement in Judaism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

3 Kozik, *The Ukrainian National Movement in Galicia*, 3–6.

4 Ibid., 9, 30.

5 Robert A. Kann and Zdenek V. David, *The Peoples of the Eastern Habsburg Lands, 1526–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), 201, 213–214, 250, 364.

1.3. National Ideas in the Wake of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and in Russia

Following the Napoleonic wars, German idealistic philosophy exerted great influence upon the intelligentsia in Russia, an influence that was to leave its mark on all levels of Russian society. Schelling and Hegel were the two main thinkers, the “rulers of thought” in the eyes of Russian intellectuals. Their respective views were markedly different from one another and they influenced two different streams within Russian intellectual society. In his later thought, Schelling distanced himself from the rationalist approach and preferred the “divine revelation”—that is, the philosophical and mystical perception of religion. He therefore sharply criticized Hegel’s thought because of its excessive rationalism, and accused it of giving legitimacy to a rationalist approach.⁶

The worldview of these two thinkers provided the basis for the two leading tendencies within Russian thought—the Western tendency and the Slavophile one. In the eyes of those who supported the Western tendency, Hegel was the symbol of truth and progress;⁷ whereas other members of the Russian intelligentsia turned toward Schelling, under whose inspiration the Slavophile tendency took shape. Moreover, in his teaching they found support for their ideological break with Europe. Specifically, they drew from Schelling’s thought the idea that each nation has a task and destiny defined for it by Divine power—and that this alone is the reason and purpose for its very existence.⁸

The young Russian intellectuals sought to shape a philosophy and mystical perception of their own based upon the German model. They saw themselves as the future reformers of Russian culture and as the shapers of Russian thought.⁹ Their aim was to set up a completely new system of overarching values, which would be accepted as absolute, eternal, stable, and lasting. These would be adopted alongside what they perceived as the traditional values of Russian national identity, and would replace the existing world order that was not rooted in the depths of Russian national consciousness.

The discussion of the nature of the Russian nation, while stressing its unique characteristics, was part of an intensive process of growing involvement

6 A. M. Peskov, “U istokov russkogo filosofstvovaniia: Shellingianskie tainstva liubomudrov,” *Voprosy filosofii* 5 (1994): 89–100.

7 P. V. Annenkov, *Literaturnye vospominaniia*, intro. V. I. Kuleshov, notes A. M. Dolotova, G. G. Elizavetina, I. V. Mann, and I. B. Pavlova (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1983), 76–77.

8 A. V. Gulyga, *Shelling* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1982), 298–300.

9 Peskov, “Shellingianskie tainstva liubomudrov,” 92.

with the subject of national identity at that time—which to a large extent is to be attributed to the intellectual influence of Western philosophical ideas that had penetrated into Russia from Europe. In other words, the process of seeking national roots in Russia was part of a general process that was occurring in Eastern Europe, which over the course of time led to the creation and development of national liberation movements.¹⁰

1.4. The “Lovers of Wisdom” (Lyubomudry) Movement in Russia

The above-described process, unlike its Western parallels, was characterized by extreme individualism in interpretation of Russian national identity. In Russia, the process began with the organization of a group known as the “Lovers of Wisdom” (Lyubomudry), led by Prince Vladimir Odoevsky, whose members were the forbearers of both the Westernizing and the Slavophile movements. From the 1820s onwards, this group discusses questions regarding the unique national path of Russia, the meaning of its existence, and the aim of the Russian people in light of its world-historical background—ideas that originated in the earlier circles of young Russian writers and intellectuals influenced by Romanticism.

The goal of this group was of a patriotic nature—namely, to bring practical benefit to Russia. Dmitry Venevitinov,¹¹ one of the leaders of the group, defined the life goal of every Russian citizen in terms of the desire “to act with persistence and stubbornness of mind to bring benefit to his people.” The Lovers of Wisdom defined their approach as “the journey to self-knowledge” unique to each nation—this, under the inspiration of the thought of Schelling, whose strong influence was recognizable in their society. They saw in this journey to self-knowledge the goal of mankind, one of the ways of spreading the Enlightenment.¹²

Already at the beginning of their path, the Lovers of Wisdom assumed as self-evident that the process of self-knowledge in Russia was different from its parallels in other nations. The basic ideas of Russian Enlightenment and philosophy during the period preceding that of the Lovers of Wisdom were

10 N. A. Berdiaev, *Aleksei Stepanovich Khomiakov: Ocherk* (Moscow: Tipografia A. I. Mamontova, 1912; reprinted: Farnborough: Gregg Publishing House, 1971), 7–10.

11 Dmitry Vladimirovich Venevitinov (1805–1827) was a Russian Romantic poet who died at the age of twenty-one. Venevitinov and his friends were the young idealists who introduced into Russia the cult of Goethe and Schelling’s metaphysics. See D. V. Venevitinov, *Stikhotvoreniia. Proza* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 129.

12 Ibid., 232–234.

borrowed from other European peoples, and received their great impetus primarily after the pro-Western reforms of Czar Peter I (the Great).¹³ According to the Lovers of Wisdom, the self-knowledge of the Russian people had been distorted from the outset because, rather than coming to know their own culture, they turned their back to it and copied the European ways of life. For that reason, they thought, one needs to alter the course of development of Enlightenment in Russia to return to the sources of Russia itself, so that “the nature of the nation will develop through its own power, in its own authentic and original way, characteristic of itself alone.”¹⁴

1.5. The Slavophile Movement, the “Russian Soul,” A. A. Khomiakov

The doctrine of the Lovers of Wisdom was, in practice, the earliest Russian ideology, free of imitation, upon which the Slavophile movement was based.¹⁵ The Slavophile movement, notwithstanding the fact that it united various distinct and separate tendencies, embodied a consistent understanding of Russia’s unique national path. This was expressed in various publications in the areas of philosophy and religion written in opposition to German philosophy, which was understood as an alien way of thought, even though this movement in fact drew upon many of its ideas. This may be seen in the writings of such Russian thinkers as Khomiakov, Kireyevsky,¹⁶ the brothers Aksakov,¹⁷ Yu. Samarin,¹⁸ and S. Shevyrev,¹⁹ who were the acknowledged leaders of the Slavophile movement.

13 Peter I (the Great; 1672–1726; reigned 1682–1726) was one of the most important Russian leaders of all times. He introduced many reforms in order to advance Russia and bring it closer to the developed countries of Europe; he founded and built the city of St. Petersburg, which is named after him.

14 Venevitinov, *Stikhotvoreniia. Proza*, 129.

15 Berdiaev, *Khomiakov*, 2–6.

16 Ivan Vasilyevich Kireyevsky (1806–1856) was a Russian literary critic and philosopher. Together with Aleksei Khomiakov, he cofounded the Slavophile movement.

17 Ivan Sergeyevich Aksakov (1823–1886) was a Russian writer and one of the founders of the Slavophile movement.

18 Yuri Fedorovich Samarin (1819–1976) was a leading Slavophile thinker and one of the promoters of the Emancipation reform of the 1861. He befriended another Slavophile, Konstantin Aksakov, from an early age. Samarin was an ardent admirer of Hegel and Khomiakov. See N. I. Tsimbareva, “Vstuplenie,” in Iu. F. Samarin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, ed. N. I. Tsimbareva (Moscow: Moskovskii filosofskii fond, 1996), 3–22.

19 Stepan Petrovich Shevyrev (1806–1864) was a Russian literary critic, literary historian, and poet, member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences (1847). He was a member of the Society of Lovers of Wisdom.

The leaders of this movement were among the first to express in a coherent and systematic way the ideas that were widespread in the social environment in those days. Their worldview served as an influential ideological framework for the thinkers of the following generations, which was felt throughout the course of the nineteenth century.²⁰ Towards the beginning of the 1840s the Slavophile tendency took shape as an explicitly ideological movement, against the background of polemics with other ideological movements—especially the Westernizing movements.²¹

As noted above, Khomiakov was considered a central figure in Russian society, serving as the spokesman of the social, literary, and religious thought in Russia during the 1840s. Berdiaev described him as “the strongest, most versatile, and most active figure in the Slavophile movement, who in his writings gave expression to the religious doctrine of the Slavophiles, their philosophy, their historical point of view, and their publicistics.”²² Khomiakov’s thought embodied the basic assumptions defining Russian national identity, with its unique characteristics. He redefined the concept of Russia national identity, thereby laying the basis for the concept of the “Russian soul.”²³ He wrote:

Have we indeed fully understood the concept of the nation—which is the true, exclusive and eternal creator of the course of world history? Have we indeed derived the conclusion called for, that each nation has a face of its own, like a living person? It is that which determines the fate of the states in which these peoples live, and which elevates its name by virtue of the righteous, sublime truth planted deep in its

20 Berdiaev, *Khomiakov*, 7.

21 A. I. Gertsen, *Byloe i dumy* (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1947), 272–275.

22 Berdiaev, *Khomiakov*, 24–25.

23 The term “Russian soul” has been used in literature and thought to describe Russian spirituality. Depth, strength, and compassion are general characteristics of the Russian soul. The term and the concept of Russian soul arose in the 1840s with the advent of German Romantic literature in Russia, again under the influence of Hegel and Schelling. Schelling introduced the concept of a “world soul,” meaning the potential for a creative connection between humanity and the divine. Hegel formulated a conception of collective, national soul. The ideas of Schelling and Hegel formed the ideologies of the Slavophiles and Westernizers, which both cultivated a bold new nationalism. The Slavophiles drew upon Hegel’s “national spirit” to form the concept of a “Russian spirit” embodied by the peasantry. Their idea of “Russian soul” represented the desire to seek Russia’s greatness in its pre-Petrine past.

roots—or that, on the contrary, may send it to a wasteland, condemn it to devastation, destroy and ruin them.²⁴

Khomiakov championed the idea that each nation has its own unique character and destiny—his main concern being the recognition of the uniqueness of the Russian people. Each and every nation is required, according to his approach, to define for itself its goal and to invest the necessary efforts to realize it. The goal of the Russian people, in Khomiakov's view, is of a religious-ethical character; therefore the way towards true understanding of its goal will be paved for the Russian people if it brings about an "ethical revolution," to use his language—but only after suitable moral purification that includes regret for its sins, and persistence in strict self-education.²⁵

Khomiakov was a significant figure in the Russian socio-cultural milieu of his day. His influence upon the Russian intellectuals was considerable even beyond his time. He issued a call to the enlightened Russian intelligentsia to play an active role in the life of the lower classes of the people and in their reeducation. His influence may be recognized even in the case of those who disagreed with his ideological path and were forced to confront his opinions, such as A. Herzen,²⁶ Khomiakov's ideological rival, who still admired his comprehension of things and his personal talents. Khomiakov shaped the Slavophile movement from its outset and to a large extent determined the course of its development. The theoretical manifesto of this stream proclaimed the rebellion against Western culture and the absolute reverence for authentic Russian culture.²⁷

The Slavophiles claimed that their ancient original Russian roots were to be found in the doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church, which they saw as the symbol of the Russian spirit, realized in the Russian people. The Slavophiles saw the Russian people as the standard-bearer for the unity of all the sectors of Christianity, and as the future spiritual leader of all mankind, its ultimate goal being the creation of worldwide brotherhood on earth. They believed that the esoteric spiritual unity of the monarchy and of the authentic Russian people, that is, of the simple folk, makes Russia into a singularly unified world, totally different from the West.

24 A. A. Levandovskii, *Vremia Granovskogo. U istokov formirovaniia russkoi intelligentsii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1990), 167.

25 A. S. Khomiakov, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, ed. and intro. N. S. Arsen'ev (New York: Chekhov Publishers, 1955), 320; G. P. Fedotov, *Sud'ba i grekhi Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Sofia, 1991).

26 Aleksandr Ivanovich Herzen (1812–1870) was a Russian writer and thinker known as the "father of Russian socialism." Herzen was among the main representatives of the Westernizers' ideology in Russia.

27 See Gertsen, *Byloe i dumy*, 271.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Приобрести книгу можно

в интернет-магазине

«Электронный универс»

e-Univers.ru