

## HOW TO SAVE THE FUTURE AND WHAT DIFFERENTIATES UTOPIA FROM STRATEGY?

*“Isn’t it an utopia – to preserve life on the globe? I don’t think so. I believe that public opinion is capable to efficiently exert influence upon governments pushing them in the required direction. <...> Humans are responsible not only for their own survival. The issue is about saving the whole variety of life, which is the highest value. But the only living creature on the globe given the gift of the word is the Man. He has speech and consciousness – and he is the only hope of all life on Earth”.*

*D.S. Lihkachov, “To Bring Up a Citizen of the World in Oneself”*

It’s difficult to preserve the heritage of the past, but it’s even more difficult to preserve the future that we can lose because of risks, which are really lying beyond the bound, with which transformation of the technology-related civilization into the monocivilization is related. As a result of this unnoticeable evolution, the very possibility of preservation of cultural and lingual variety of the world is excluded from our being as well as the sentence is passed to the whole biodiversity of the world. Raising this issue is seen by many people, including scholars, as just an alarmist method to obtain investments going into research. In the best case the very raising of the issue is looked upon as an obviously pessimistic but unlikely forecast that is allowed purely theoretically “for the fullness of the picture”, though really there is no doubt in the scales of the approaching catastrophe, and the deficit of time required for working out the collective strategy, capable to minimize risks, is becoming acuter every passing year.

Why does it happen? One of the main reasons is a fairly explainable limitation of the researchers’ position, as a rule they don’t go beyond the limits of a narrow branch of knowledge, to say nothing of barriers between the humanitarian and natural branches of knowledge. Only a few representatives of the academic community have

the strength to overcome them, they have the really encyclopedic range of interests and “well-known names” in world science, certifying that there is qualitatively new knowledge at the back of their encyclopedic learning but not common amateurishness. Amateurishness is dangerous not because people suffering from it spread fake knowledge, but because it devaluates those evident truths that are usually interlaced into unreliable foundations and because of that are taken as false doctrines.

Happily, there are thinkers found sometimes among both humanists and natural scientists of such scales that allow them to be true teachers and prophets even “in their Motherland”. I’ll mention only two names of world-famous Russian scholars, who fully correspond to the role of prophets from science – they are D.S. Likhachov, who brought up his research to the level of the “ecology of culture” understanding, and N.N. Moiseev with his world-famous foundation of the “nuclear winter” hypothesis. They are also drawn together by the fact that their vision of the problem noticeably and positively affected the general political culture and the vector for searching acceptable strategies for international cooperation. After they passed away, everyone feels that the degree of risk considerably increases when there are definitely not enough such weighty authorities in the academic community, capable to influence both the mass consciousness and the choice of political course.

When speaking about the civilization’s future, D.S. Likhachov directly pointed at its main “murderer”, the role of which is played, no matter how paradoxically it may sound, by the popular and fruitful idea of progress in its most primitive (and because of that the most popular) interpretation: “The idea of progress accompanies the history of the mankind over the visible period (not so long). Starting from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, its meaning is decisive in most historical teachings and doctrines. It in its primitive forms views the past and the present as a victim sacrificed in the name of the future. But it turned out that in real life it started sacrificing the future in the name of the short present”.<sup>1</sup>

N.N. Moiseev came to a similar conclusion, though all his academic studies were based on a completely different picture (pictures) of the world. The project-

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<sup>1</sup> Likhachov D.S. Russian Culture. Moscow, 2000. P. 347.

oriented thinking evidently dominated in his creative work, and consequently in the idea of technical and technologic progress. But the new idea in his consciousness nearly always grew up to the scales of a big strategy, often global, with inter-branch penetrations and philosophical generalizations typical for strategies' synthesis. He was not afraid of big horizons when an idea grew up to really cosmic scales. Probably, because of that he felt very keenly about the theory of noosphere, according to which the mankind enters the era of the human mind's omnipotence, acquiring the ability to create prerequisites itself, required for providing the co-evolution of nature and society, without which not only forward movement but also preservation of life are impossible.

The idea of noosphere was variously interpreted in the works of many thinkers – theologians, natural scientists and humanists. Many contemporary authors studying Likhachov's legacy, refer his views to a kind of modifications of the noosphere doctrine, though it's not exactly that as there is no and there never was a common doctrine, but there are completely different though related concepts. At the same time, as it's well-known, Likhachov tied his theory of conceptosphere with V.I. Vernadsky's theory, and the "conceptosphere" term was introduced by him by analogy with such concepts as noosphere and biosphere. The noosphere concept became world-famous thanks to frankly utopian and, as Moiseev emphasized, strictly illusionary teaching by Teilhard de Chardin about the fusion of nations into one whole, that the author of this concept thought it the omen of "the mankind's fusion with Nature and God" and consequently establishment of noosphere as the final of the evolution and history.

V.I. Vernadsky filled this term with a completely different meaning, in the beginning of the century (in 1904) he said from the rostrum at the Moscow University that humans turned into the main geology-forming force on the globe. And a little bit later he said that humans would have to take the full responsibility upon themselves not only for the fates of the society but biosphere as a whole as well.

Moiseev paid special attention to this topic and viewed this and other noosphere teachings as great utopias, differently directed and competing in many

aspects (“finalist”, “alarmist” and “motivational”), in which nevertheless there is a grain of truth – acknowledgement of the Collective Intellect’s rights and responsibility. The idea of noosphere for Moiseev was productive to the highest degree as it contained the highest imperative, which the mankind should accept for one reason – because there are no alternatives, for self-preservation in the face of the inevitable catastrophe.

He introduced the idea of the *ecological imperative* into the academic circulation to clarify his position, it was the main guarantee of a possibility of development without a global catastrophe, the probability of which should be minimized. In his opinion, the main difficulty of the modern times is that acknowledgement of an ecological imperative in the academic community and what is no less important, political community, is just a small step on the way of an imperative’s really becoming the absolute imperative – unconditional instruction for action. And establishment of new in essence organizational structures on global scales will be required for that.

It is necessary to say how far this idea is from being brought into life in our times? That’s the reason it is perceived by us as an absolute utopia. But the matter is that this utopia has no alternatives. According to Moiseev, the issue is only if the radical change in the society’s arrangement takes place spontaneously, “when transfer is related to elimination of a considerable part of the mankind (and maybe death of the whole mankind) or realization of some optimal transfer STRATEGY developed by the Collective Intellect”.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Moiseev understood general knowledge and ability to use the technology of transfer, accumulation and use of information under the Collective Intellect – all that information system, including the decision-taking technology, which may only originate based on the general understanding of the goal. In his opinion, “establishment of the Collective Intellect is as natural process as the brain and individual intellect development”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Moiseev N.N. The Time to Determine National Goals. Moscow: Publishing House of the International Independent Ecological-Political University, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. P. 136.

Developing Moiseev's thought, it's possible to say that the sustainable development concept can serve as the first step on the way of turning the utopia into strategy. This worldview and mindset predetermined the wideness of Moiseev academic interests. His legacy is still equally interesting for mathematicians, ecologists, representatives of engineering sciences and philosophers. Let's dwell on only one facet of his creative legacy – his globally spread sustainable development concept, which many people perceive as pure utopia and others as the only right strategy. But in order to come to this problem, it will be required to explain Moiseev's attitude to utopias and strategies more clearly, to be more exact, to what we traditionally refer *either to utopias or strategies*. Usually we don't find any connections between these categories from the completely different at first sight worlds – the illusionary world and the real world. But when we start speaking about the project-oriented thinking and scientific provision for really big and socially important inter-branch projects, everything changes cardinally. And by the way, here we also see the similarity of his position and Likhachov's position (see the epigraph).

*First*, exactly the brave ideas that are perceived as pure utopias even in academic circles, especially if they encroach upon basic paradigms and traditional views, turn out to be the most productive for choosing strategies.

*Second*, no one knows which of the large-scaled projects aspiring to change the world is an utopia, and which has a real strategy in it: the number of factors is too big – both subjective and objective from which success or failure are finally composed.

*Third*, even a fairly successfully realized project is not a proof of its not being utopian. For example, one hundred years were required in order for the great and definitely not unsuccessful project for society building without exploitation and exploiters and also in a single country, that took place in defiance of everything and allowed in the shortest period of time to restore the state from ruins and break the spine of Nazi utopia, to be recognized... as a no less dangerous utopia than Fascism. By the way, bringing the Nazi regime down to utopia is not the wisest and far-sighted policy just for a simple reason that the brown plague that took millions of lives, was stopped only because of sacrifices and heroic deeds of our people, whose ideals we

now call undoubtedly utopian... And we should not ignore the fact that this ideological plague can revive at the new spiral of history as there is no guarantee that the following generations will preserve the immunity to this plague. And those who recently proved that the Communist global project had no alternatives and could not have them, were the first to see only dangerous utopia in this more than successful social experiment...

*Fourth*, realization of such a geopolitical project as the European Union project was in essence is fairly instructive for understanding the transfer of utopia into reality. Count R. Coudenhove-Kalergi was its “general constructor”, he started this project in the 1920s, in the previous century, when everyone thought it to be an absolute utopia, but he worded the principle of transforming utopia into strategy already at that time. He thought with fairly enough substantiation that the idea of Pan-Europe would be inevitably accused of its utopian character, though establishment of Pan-Europe, according to him, was not against any law of nature. On the contrary, “Pan-Europe is in accordance with the interests of the overwhelming majority of Europeans, and there is damage to the interests of an unimportant minority. This small but very strong minority, that today decides the fates of Europe, would like to attach the utopia label to the idea of Pan-Europe. But this can be answered that every great historical event started as utopia and ended as reality”.

Coudenhove-Kalergi gives the fact of the Communists’ rule in Russia as an example, it seemed an utopia for all – up to the moment when their victory became a reality. And basing on that he comes to the conclusion about the inverse relation between politicians’ abilities for fantasies and their abilities for planning. The more limited the fantastic world is, the wider the world of utopia seems and the narrower the boundaries of the possible. According to Coudenhove-Kalergi, “The world history has a richer fantasy than its puppets, its being a chain of alternating unexpected events and utopias brought into life. The idea’s staying an utopia or becoming a reality depends as a rule on the number of its supporters and their energy. While thousands of people believe in the idea of Pan-Europe — it’s an utopia, as

soon as millions believe in it — it will become a political program, and only when one hundred million believe in it, it will become a reality”.<sup>4</sup>

But let's come back to Moiseev's theory and his no less paradoxical vision of this problem but much weighted in a lot of aspects, taking into account the fact that a *successfully brought into life project can stay an utopia* as well. He demonstrated with a lot of examples how utopia changed into strategy and strategy changed into utopia. And this process cannot be considered a one-way process either. In his opinion, “any human activity, especially in the intellectual sphere, always starts from utopias”. And he referred this governing law of the project-oriented thinking, first of all, to himself. In his book *The Civilization's Destiny. The Way of Mind* he speaks about his projects as utopias but of a special kind, singling out “*constructive utopias*”, basing not on theoretician's logic but on Nature's logic, among all kinds of utopias.

According to Moiseev, his own theory is also an utopia but referred to *constructive utopias*. Its principal difference is that describing it he did not try to say how the future world should be constructed and only about *what should not be done and without which it was impossible to do*. At the same time, it will be supported by the system of empirical generalizations or logical consequences of the whole pattern of the evolutionary process, the fragments of which make the history of the mankind”.<sup>5</sup>

Moiseev thought that any long-term forecasts and any construction patterns for the society of the future will always be groundless and utopian in this sense as the life itself would command how the world should be constructed in future centuries. “But still such utopias are required by people — they are a kind of catalyst for human thought and activities. The necessity of prognostic patterns using the scientific data will grow more and more with the growth of civilization's power and the role of the

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<sup>4</sup> Coudenhove-Kalergi R.N. Pan-Europe. Moscow: Vita Planetare, 2006. P. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Moiseev N.N. The Civilization's Destiny. The Way of Mind. Moscow: Publishing House of the International Independent Ecological-Political University, 1998. P. 90.

mind in the mankind's destinies — they are capable to foresee dangers”, he emphasized.<sup>6</sup>

And now let's come back to Moiseev's attitude to the sustainable development concept and respectively the sustainable development strategy. He wrote in one of his papers dedicated to this topic: “I am not striving to find a substitute for the sustainable development term or to offer another translation that could replace evidently not the best one Russian variant. We should just forget this trivial interpretation. But I think that it is absolutely necessary to give another meaning to the term: sustainable development is realization of human strategy. The mankind as a whole and each country individually will run across and overcome numerous crises, ups and downs. This is the way for continuous searches and not a sustainable development. And the more scientifically verified the strategy is, the less painful crises are”.<sup>7</sup>

In our opinion, there is only one link lacking in this reasoning. Today, there is even no draft classification for various phenomena of completely different genesis from scientific, political and media spheres of life, to which the fashionable “sustainable development concept” is applied. Such blurred understanding of the term is really an obstacle for us, in essence it leads to its devaluation, de-termination. The reason comes down to one methodological mistake, which is exaggeration of the role ascribed to academic circles in formation of the sustainable development concept. Really, this concept is accepted on completely different principles than scientific theories. They are approved not by scholars but politicians on the basis of respective procedures. The expert community is really engaged at some stages, it includes the “first-grade” experts – specialists providing conclusions, for example, about the worked out documents being in accordance with the norms of the acting national legislation and the international law, a possibility of provision with resources and finances, etc, and there are also representative of academic circles, the public, prominent figures in the field of culture taking part...

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<sup>6</sup> Moiseev N.N. Selected Works. In 2 volumes. V. 2. P. 143.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



But as a rule, they are not participating in the most important stages of decision taking. And politicians as it is well-known proceed from other ideas, dictated by national, corporate, lobbistic and other interests, having no relation to science, the sense of party or group solidarity and finally strengthening of their own “sustainability” in the system. At the same time, it is sometimes required to sacrifice even the logic and the system of theoretical foundations for coordination of differently directed interests of the process participants. Actually this fact is the reason of indignation in academic circles that clearly see defects in foundation and logic and because of that they try to “correct the concept” offering their variants and are sincerely surprised that they are not heard.

This paradoxical situation brought Moiseev to the radical conclusion that “the sustainable development concept is one of the most dangerous delusions of the modern times, especially in the way it is interpreted by politicians and economists”. The reason of extraordinary risk is primitivism of political and economic interpretations, setting hopes on technocratic way of solving global problems. Really, the mankind will still have to overcome a long and thorny path full of planetary-scale tragedies. But “the society should be ready for that, and we don’t have the right to replace the reality with simplified and dangerous illusions. This path will be completely different from sustainable development”.<sup>8</sup>

We don’t intend to tell the history of this concept’s establishment in the political sphere and its forerunners in the field of politics and science (and this is a long history), we’ll just remind the basic landmarks of its development. The International Union for Conservation of Nature is singled out among other organizers of political discussions at international venues. In 1980, it offered the International Strategy for Conservation of Nature, where this concept was singled out, jointly with other international organizations. Because of that it’s not surprising that from the very beginning *three main dimensions of the world’s development: ecological, economic and social* were reviewed in this concept, with ecological problems having top priority.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. P. 83.

All the main global problems, that were and still are the contents of political discourse, were viewed through this prism. There are limitations of population growth and poverty, maintaining the quality of life and protection of global ecosystems among them as well as conservation of strategic natural resources and minimization of the consequences of pollution of the environment, which are becoming threatening with globalization and economic growth as a background. The Overview by the World Commission on Environment and Development “Our Common Future” also known as the Brundtland Report has become an important landmark in the development of the political sustainable development concept and strengthening of the “economic dominant”. The notion of sustainability was used in the Report as a synonym for the notion of “sustainable economic growth” as it exactly will allow to solve the poverty problem and the problem of pollution of the environment.

As we see, the sustainable development concept from the very beginning acquired the well-defined character, and that was searching for a compromise by the leading countries of the world, and that led to nearly each of them acquiring its own strategy and sustainable development program. The issue of a possibility to single out any scientific theory as the basis for the sustainable development strategy respectively went to the background.

Let’s come to some intermediary conclusions from the above-said.

*First*, the basis of the sustainable development concept, surely if viewed in a maximally simplified way, is the *principle of three dimensions’ equality* – economic, social and ecological. In this case, we are dealing not with the next global utopia but just a technology for global risks control that may be more or less effective as well as with a fairly developed ranking system for evaluation of various countries’ achievements from the sustainable development positions.

*Second*, if the value of a scientific theory and research program is predetermined, first of all by its heuristic and epistemological potential, a political concept, doctrine and strategy have a completely different purpose. Here everything is determined by its ability or inability to optimize the achievement of political goals

and regulate the political actors' behaviour at all "branches" and "floors" of power. And the architectonics of politics is fairly complex, and the sustainable development concept functions and is interpreted differently at each "floor" and level of power.

The noticeable turn of the Russian politics to ecology is beginning to show recently, it took place to a large extent under the influence of the best-known scholars, and following the ecological imperative in politics turned out to be unexpected for many people. And coming back to the Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation confirms exactly such a turn. We won't speak in detail about the history of the Doctrine's creation and the way the project had to go from the idea's origination to the official approval of the document by the Government of the Russian Federation. We'll just mention the important for our report aspect of the topic: the sustainable development concept, fixed in respective international agreements and charters, is in the basis of the Ecological Doctrine. If you open the Doctrine, it is already said about that in the preamble.

The Russian Ecological Doctrine draft was approved at the meeting of the Government of the Russian Federation on August 27, 2002, i.e. several days before the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (September, 2002). Thus, the first in Russian history experience in national strategic planning was successfully finished, the main stage of it took place not in offices of public officials, not isolated from the public opinion but in academic groups and nongovernmental organizations, attracting all people, who are not indifferent to the future of their native land, to the discussion. This seems especially important as the state ecological doctrine is nothing else but a kind of "sailing directions" for long-term sector planning for bodies of authority at all levels.

Thorough work at regional strategies is required to realize the Ecological Doctrine, first of all at the Russian Northern Strategy, as two thirds of Russia are northern territories. The Northern Socio-Ecological Congress was organized for this purpose, it was already held eleven times in Moscow, in many northern cities of Russia and Norway. The most important were the Fifth Congress in Syktyvkar, the results of the International Polar Year were summed up for the first time in Russia

as a part of it, and the Eleventh Congress, where ten years of our work were summarized and new plans were outlined.<sup>9</sup> The multi-volume library of the Congress has been gradually formed.

The organizers of the Northern Socio-Ecological Congress coordinate their work with the RAS Academic Council for the Study and Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage, set up by academician Ye.P. Chelysh together with a group of outstanding scholars, among whom Likhachov played a special role.<sup>10</sup> The Russian Civilization Way is an extremely promising program initiated and carried out by this Council, the top priority there is inter-branch research of the cultural and natural synthesis being the basis of local civilizations' development. A special place among these principles is occupied by the principle of unity of cultural and natural factors in the process of world civilizations' establishment (cultural and historical types). This principle is important not only for understanding the special features of the Russian civilization way as of a country-civilization, its worldwide importance and relations with other civilization worlds, but also for research of the civilizational uniqueness of northern territories of Russia and other Arctic nations.

It's noteworthy that here we also come in contact with Likhachov's and Moiseev's legacy, who viewed the Ecological imperative principle and the sustainable development concept as a part of the civilizational approach. Under civilization he understood "some community of people, characterized by a certain set of values (including both technologies and skills), the system of common prohibitions, similarity (but not identity) of spiritual worlds, etc." At the same time, he keenly felt differences existing between various conceptual patterns, on the basis of which we distinguish monocivilizational theories based on unification of the global process, and theories describing local civilizations. According to Moiseev, "any evolutionary process, including development of a civilization, is also accompanied by growth of variety of life arrangement forms, including 'civilizational varieties' —

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<sup>9</sup> Preliminary result of the Northern Socio-Ecological Congress are presented in the book: Northern Studies: the Problem Field, Methodology and Socioeconomic Fundamentals for Long-term Planning. Pushkino: Center of Strategic Conjunction, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Co-Chairmen of the Council are academicians Ye.P. Chelyshev and V.A. Chereshev

civilization never was and will never be united no matter the technological community uniting the mankind”.<sup>11</sup>

His criticism of S. Huntington’s theory of the clash of civilizations, with the conclusion about the role of civilization break-up borders in modern history, is especially interesting in this respect. However, Huntington’s arguments do not seem convincing enough for Moiseev as the reasons of the inevitable clash of civilizations are in much deeper horizons than it seems to the author: “One of the most important reasons for contemporary confrontations of civilizations are modernization processes and creation and spreading of some standards common for the globe, satisfying the requirements of the arising technological basis of civilization. But gradually these confrontations will transfer to the sphere of ecology”.<sup>12</sup>

As we can see, N.N. Moiseev’s legacy is as multi-faceted as the issues he raised.

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<sup>11</sup> Moiseev N.N. Selected Works. In 2 volumes. V. 2. P. 92.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. P. 90.