

Nikolay Smirnov

# Elements of Immanentism in Russia: Double Belief, Cosmism, and Marx

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## Three Holy Families

Numerous phenomena of Russian culture can be understood as manifestations of immanentism. In this context, immanentism describes an extensive family of syncretic worldviews that reject the principle of transcendence common to the Abrahamic religions and focus all their attention on the “world below,” i.e., earth, cosmos, ecumene, the material environment, or social relations. In its extreme form, immanentism either wholly denies the existence of any reality beyond the boundaries of the physical world or asserts that this reality is verified exclusively by and through human beings. In its most general form, metaphysical immanentism posits humans and the environment immediately accessible to their senses, reason, and action as the center of existence. Political immanentism, in turn, considers human beings in the context of an existing sociopolitical order, even when it is the subject’s aim to effect change in this order. Finally, religious immanentism posits the highest being as present and acting in this world. In his 1917 work *Unfading Light*, theologian Sergei Bulgakov applies the label of immanentism to a whole range of religious, philosophical, and social currents, from Protestantism and mystic sectarianism on the one hand to Kantianism and Marxism on the other. Bulgakov saw them all as mere variations of “Arianist Monophysitism” or “Khlystism,” i.e., heresies and sects within Christianity which deny, like Arians, the predetermined, divine character of Christ’s nature (–the consubstantiality of the Son and the Father) and therefore believe, like members of the Khlyst sect, that every person can become divine or Christlike in the course of his life.

In what follows, I will examine three fragments of Russian immanentism, which I have called the “three holy families.” These three instances do not exhaust the full range of immanentism found in Russian culture. At the same time, they can be seen as “building blocks” that have been arranged in a variety of combinations at various junctures. In this regard, the “three families” and their subsequent evolution and hybridization play a key role in an integral field of syncretic immanentism.

### I. Double Belief and the Religious Life of the People

The first “holy family” of Russian immanentism is a distinctive vernacular religiosity or *double belief* wherein elements of Christianity always coexist – and at times are synthesized – with elements of paganism. There are religions that tend more toward immanentism than others, and some, like animism and pantheism, may even embody it in its pure form. A religious paradigm

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Gnezdo Collective, *The Fertilization of the Earth*, 1976. Documentation of a performance. Photo: Igor Palmin. Collection State Museum and Exhibition Center ROSIZO.

may have a weak transcendent principle or lack it altogether. For example, the animist and his divinities inhabit the same world. For many centuries, “popular belief” in Russia incorporated marked features of paganism, such as the deification of the forces of nature. In terms of social organization, this hybrid religiosity coexisted with official Orthodoxy, but also found outlets in various sects and religious communes.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a Romanticist “discovery of the people” fueled an interest in the peculiarities of vernacular belief in Russia.<sup>1</sup> In 1847, the Slavophile Stepan Shevyrev discovered a collection of documents – the so-called Paisievsky Sbornik – in the library of the Cyril-Belozersk monastery. Many of these texts, dating back to the eleventh through fourteenth centuries, were directed at the eradication of pagan superstitions among the people. The subsequent study and analysis of these texts yielded the concept of “double belief” in Christianity and paganism, which came to be adopted, however paradoxically, by a vast group including Slavophiles, Westernizers, liberals, the Narodniki (Populist) movement, socialists, canonical church historians, and Orthodox theologians, as well as secular

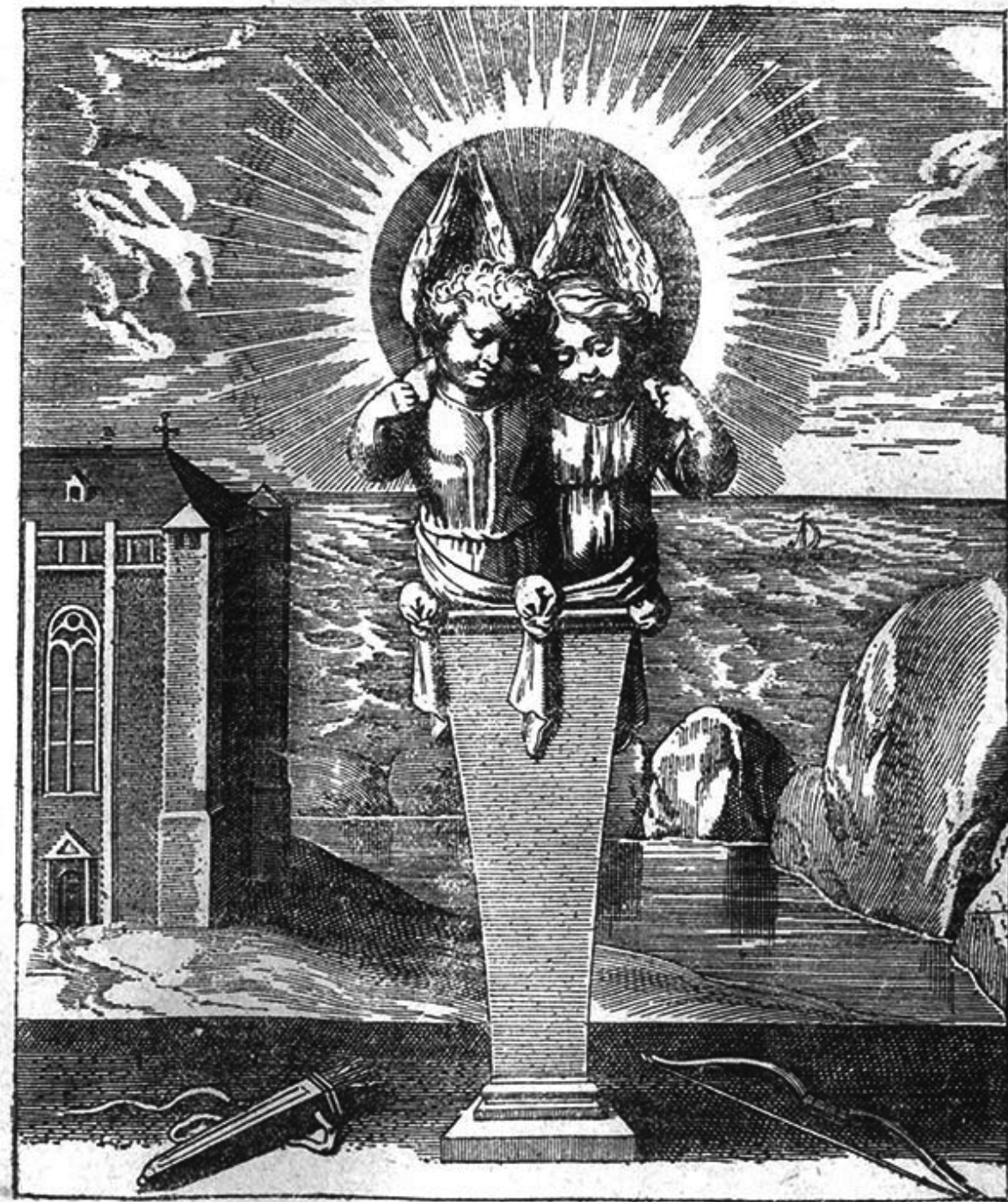
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historians.<sup>2</sup> According to this conception, Orthodoxy coexisted seamlessly with paganism in Russian religious life, in practice as well as in worldview. So, in his late-nineteenth-century analysis of early Russian Christianity, historian of the church Evgeny Golubinsky speaks of village priests who, being close to the people, shared their belief in the sacred character of the material world.<sup>3</sup> According to Golubinsky, the Christianity of the aristocracy was radically transcendent, and strove rather to reject, overcome, and displace anything material (profane, bodily, sensuous), while aspiring to a supermundane spirituality (a transcendent God). Popular religion, on the other hand, gravitated toward immanentism. In this regard, the schism between the immanent and the transcendent took hold within the Russian Orthodox Church itself, corresponding with the already existing divide between the “white” and “black” clergy.<sup>4</sup>

Remarkably, the people’s religious connection to the material world, symbolized by the earth, was construed in familial terms, and even sexualized in certain instances. As the source of living, nurturing matter and a receptacle of dead matter, the earth held a sacred status, hearkening back to Slavic mythology, but taking on new overtones with the



*Saint Sophia, The Wisdom of God, 1700. Collection: St. Sophia of Kiev. Copyright: Unknown, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.*



FINIS AMORIS, UT DUO UNUM FIANT.  
ПРЕДѢЛЪ ЛЮБВИ—ДА ДВОЕ ЕДИНО БУДУТЪ.

Otto Vaenius, *Finis amoris ut duo unum fiant* (The end of love is that two become one), 1615. This image was also used in the original edition of the book *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* by Pavel Florensky (1914).

evolution of Russian religious life. In his *Power of the Land* (1882), writer Gleb Uspensky recalls the fable of Svyatogor and Mikula Selyanovich. The giant Svyatogor cannot lift a satchel dropped by the plowman Mikula, which the latter proceeds to do with one hand, explaining the source of his strength as follows: “I am Mikula, a *muzhik* [peasant], I am Selyanovich. I am Mikula – beloved of the damp mother earth.”<sup>5</sup> Another late-nineteenth-century historian of the church, Sergey Smirnov, describes the custom observed by certain sects, like the Strigolniki, of “confessing to the earth.”<sup>6</sup> Damp mother earth nourishes and gives strength, hears confessions and pleas for help; the plowman cultivates her body, sowing it with seed to bring forth grain. In more recent times, this orgiastic religiosity would be parodied by the Moscow conceptualists in such works as *The Fertilization of the Earth* (by the Gnezdo Collective, 1976), or in the form of a patriotic sect, the Earthfuckers, in Vladimir Sorokin’s 1999 novel *Blue Lard*.<sup>7</sup>

Needless to say, from the normative institutional viewpoint of the church, keeper of the Orthodox canon, such religious practices appeared suspicious at best. As early as the eleventh century, monasteries were issuing “sermons” directed against pagan beliefs and rites practiced among the people and parish clergy.<sup>8</sup> By the nineteenth century, however, the Romantic nationalism of the Slavophiles had recast double belief in a positive light, as a distinctive feature of Russian vernacular culture. At the same time, champions of the church canon continued their attacks on double belief. In his 1909 article “Loathsome Women,” Sergey Smirnov links the practice of natural magic, animism, and pantheism with the activities of sorceresses, who have slipped from the grip of the proper patriarchal-dogmatic paradigm.

The Slavophiles’ rediscovery of double belief went hand in hand with the government-sponsored religious surveys of the mid-nineteenth century. The findings showed that at least a third of the population adhered to a noncanonical, anti-hierarchical religiosity. At the same time, the commissions conducting the surveys were staffed in large part by Slavophile ideologues, such as Ivan Aksakov, among others. Here the Slavophiles’ enthusiasm for the idiosyncratic vernacular faith came into conflict with the official interests of Nicholas I’s government. The tsar, while favorably disposed toward certain proponents of Slavophilia, considered popular belief to be a threat analogous to socialism. Indeed, the religious schism between the “elites” (aristocracy and the “black” clergy) and the “people” (principally the peasantry and the “white” clergy) would be exploited by various revolutionary projects of the

people’s liberation.<sup>9</sup>

Some Soviet historians, in turn, were interested in portraying the religious and social schism as a contributing factor to the success of the revolution of 1917. To this end, they worked to develop the theory of double belief on a new level.<sup>10</sup> In his *Paganism of Ancient Rus* (1987), historian Boris Rybakov devotes an entire section to double belief, linking paganism and animism with many elements of vernacular culture: anthropomorphic and solar motifs in carvings found on peasant cottages, talismans, ritual embroidery, ornamentation of household objects, elements of clothing, and the majority of popular holidays and rites. It was widely believed that to ward off the evil spirits that inundate the world, one must arrange one’s dwelling in a specific manner, shielding it with a “whole system of ‘embodied spells.’” Nor were these “isolated symbols, but a system, reproducing the macrocosm.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, according to Rybakov, as late as the nineteenth century, the typical Russian peasant was still largely an animist.

## II. Russian Cosmism and Sophiology: From the Redemption of Matter to Heresy

The second “holy family” of Russian immanentism comprises Russian cosmism and its near relation, Sophiology. Grounded in Eastern Christianity, these two systems incorporate certain elements of gnosticism and reinterpretations of popular belief, making them not merely noncanonical, but heretical. Influential among the Russian intellectual class, cosmism and Sophiology posit the transformation of the created world as humanity’s chief task, instilled by God himself. The adherents of these systems believe in the redemption of matter and subscribe to the ideas of the modern project, thereby either attenuating the transcendent principle or nearly immanentizing it outright. Thus, the founder of Russian cosmism, Nikolai Fedorov, believed in the pan-Christian doctrine of a transcendent origin, yet grounded his entire project in the practice – both religious and technological – of transforming the created world. Subsequent exponents of so-called “scientific cosmism,” such as Konstantin Tsiolkovsky and Vladimir Vernadsky, wholly dispensed with Orthodox views on the transcendent. In elaborating their versions of a universal materialistic monism, they believed in the total animacy of the cosmos and the reasonableness of matter, respectively. Tsiolkovsky, a pan-psychist, saw the sensate atom as a spiritual prime element of matter, while the vitalist Vernadsky argued for the existence of a cosmic intellect, hailing its chief exponent – humankind, inasmuch as human technological and economic activity are aimed at

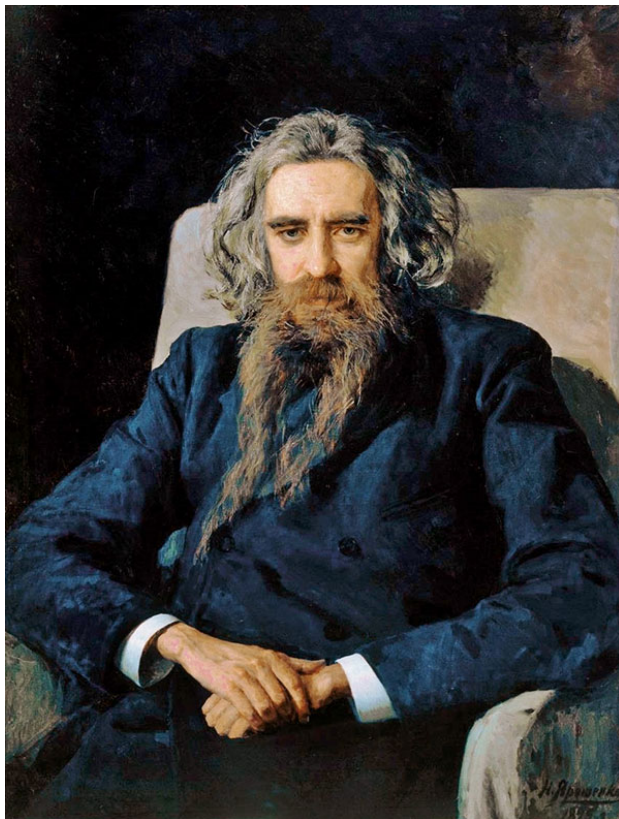
a progressive intelligibility of the world.

Sophiology, in turn, belongs to the realm of Russian religious thought, while also incorporating certain elements of Fedorov's cosmism. Of all the members of this "family," it hews closest to canonical Orthodoxy, which is why Sophiological immanentism demands careful study. In its most general form, Sophiology comprises a religious metaphysics of the transformation of the created world and an ethics of the redemption of matter through human action. Sophiology is centered on the doctrine of Sophia, or the Wisdom of God – a female representation of the divine ideal. On the one hand, Sophia is construed as a kind of guardian angel of matter, the ideal toward which the world is striving. On the other hand, Sophia is the world in its given state, fallen and untransfigured, yet bearing within itself the potentialities or "sparks" of a future transformation. Consequently, Sophia is divided into two: the Heavenly and the Earthly, the Ideal and the Fallen. In the course of the transformation – or "Sophia-ization" – of the world, the schism inherent within Sophia is to be resolved.

Vladimir Soloviev is widely recognized as the principal ideologue of the original doctrine of

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Sophia in Russia. For all its originality, however, Soloviev's Sophiology presents a distinctive synthesis of gnosticism, kabbala, the hermetic tradition, Renaissance humanism, and German idealism (mainly that of Schelling), bound up with the mystical intuitions of Jacob Boehme and the mystical-philosophical epiphanies of the eighteenth-century philosopher Grigoriy Skovoroda. According to Soloviev, Sophia is an intermediary between God and man, *anima mundi*, and a future universal humankind. The apophatic divinity reveals itself to man in the form of Sophia: the love he feels toward her is at once his yearning for God and the engine of the historical process. This love is inseparable from human goals of attaining *vseedinstvo* (all-encompassing unity) and establishing a *bogochelovechestvo* (Godmanhood, or the humanity of God), i.e., the ideal humanity. (Soloviev's idea of *vseedinstvo* implies an organic unity of world being, while preserving the individuality of all its elements.) *Vseedinstvo*, like the dialectic of the Heavenly and Earthly Sophia, is already present in the world as potentiality, but action is required for its discovery and universal attainment. Through conscious effort, a human being is able to realize the potentiality of the highest creative principle contained in the



Nikolai Yaroshenko, *Vladimir Solovyov*, 1892. Oil on canvas. Collection Tretyakov Gallery. Photo: Public Domain / Wikimedia Commons.

world, to transform himself and the world. This effort culminates in the establishment of a universal gnostic syzygy: the marriage of, in Soloviev's words, "the active (individual) human principle and the all-one idea, embodied in the social spiritual-physical organism."<sup>12</sup> There are evident alchemical overtones in Sophiology. Debased earthly matter is purified into subtle matter and ultimately transformed into pure *materia prima*. In this light, Soloviev's philosophy can be seen as a variety of "religious materialism," wherein (per the philosopher Aleksei Losev) the divinity is construed in material terms, yet the Christian dogma is preserved in its entirety.<sup>13</sup>

The doctrine of Sophia was further elaborated by Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov. Florensky, a priest, gave a series of lectures at Vkhutemas (the avant-garde art school, established in the wake of the revolution), emphasizing the aesthetic component of Sophiology, connecting it to the creative act and to praxis. "Sophia – the true Creature, or creature-in-Truth – appears first as an intimation of a transfigured, inspired world, as a vision, invisible to others, of the heavenly on earth."<sup>14</sup> Those who seek to transform the world are granted visions of Sophia – through their love

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of her – thus obtaining "blueprints" for such a transformation. Since these blueprints are visual, musical, plastic, etc. in nature, the artist's role as visionary and his subsequent actions in realizing his visions acquire marked significance. "In translating the name *Σοφία* into our own language," Florensky writes, "we would do well to say Creatrix, Artisan, Artist, etc."<sup>15</sup> Florensky conceives of Sophia as a patroness, an angel, and the subject of any transformational act. Heeding Soloviev's call for a "universal" or ecumenical religion, Florensky asserts that Sophia is united in marriage with beauty, truth, and goodness (aesthetics, knowledge, and ethics): thus art, science, and practice are fused into one. Soloviev's dichotomy of the ideal and fallen Sophia is transformed into a distinction between a "pre-world entity" and a "quantity constructed in the world," i.e., the blueprint for a transformation and the world being transformed.

In his post-Marxist, idealist phase, Sergei Bulgakov follows Florensky's lead into Sophiology (another key figure in Russian religious thought, Nikolai Berdyaev, underwent a similar transformation). Bulgakov's ideological transformation reveals him as a thinker sympathetic to the worldview of vernacular belief, yet one who at a certain point finds



Pavel Florensky with his wife Anna (née Giatzintova), 1911.



Soviet anti-religious propaganda. The cover of the booklet reads: "Against God, Priests, and Devils: Dramatizations, Songs, Recitations, and Games for Komsomol Christmas." Edited by Maria Rozen and published by Trud i kniga, Moscow, 1925. 23x15 cm. For more information: <https://www.bookvica.com/pages/books/560/soviet-anti-religious-propaganda-protiv-boga-popa-i-chertei-instsenerovki-pesni-deklamatsiya-i?soldItem=true>.



himself at the crossroads of two systems: Marxist political immanentism and Sophiology as religious-social thought. In consequence, the progression of Bulgakov's thought traces the very trajectory of the three families of immanentism examined in this essay. What, then, is this thought, and how is its transformation effected?

At the outset of his shift "from Marxism to idealism," Bulgakov proclaims the unity of purpose of practical idealism and the theory of progress, expressing contempt for "anyone, who in our own time is incapable of seeing the radiance of the absolute moral ideal in the hearts of men, who sacrifice themselves for the cause of the proletariat in its struggle for human dignity, men who know how to live and die for the cause of freedom."<sup>16</sup> Soon, however, Bulgakov reconsiders the Marxist dialectic of freedom and necessity in terms of theology: intrapersonal potentialities lead a human being to God, and consequently to freedom from worldly need. According to Bulgakov, the path toward the ideal coincides with the one toward God, but it is only possible as an immanent passive-active act: simultaneous internal contemplation and external transformation of the material world. Bulgakov gradually begins to distinguish between "theanthropic" and "anthropotheic" processes, interpreting the former as the "deification of humankind" on its way toward God, and denouncing the latter as a Luciferic lapse from the former.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, he ultimately comes to brand the philosophical systems of Feuerbach and Marx as anthropotheic, accusing the latter in particular of ignoring personal individuality and drowning it in the generic being.<sup>18</sup> In *Unfading Light*, Bulgakov sums up his critique of Marx and German philosophy generally, asserting that as immanentism it "draws fatally close to cosmotheism and anthropotheism of various shades and manifestations."<sup>19</sup> Ironically, in 1935 the Orthodox church condemned Bulgakov's Sophiology as a pantheistic and gnostic heresy, thus falling under his own rubric of immanentism and satanic anthropotheism.

Abandoning Marxism and practical idealism for Sophiology, late Bulgakov conceives Sophia as the ideal *materia prima*, the world of ideas, the noumenal cosmos, whereby the apophatic divinity creates being from nothingness. At the same time, Sophia is damp mother earth, physical matter-mother, i.e., at once the womb and the tomb of every creature – the Magna Mater venerated by the ancients. Sophia is the dual foundation of the world, its ideal entelechy and potentiality for such a transformation contained in both physical matter and in *anima mundi*, "the universal organizing principle of the world ... sought by the latest speculative

philosophy."<sup>20</sup> Sophia is at once one and poly-hypostatic, engendering all and at the same time already containing all within herself. At the same time the earth is the potential "God-earth" or the becoming Sophia: the Mother contains within itself the Mother of God – it is Sophia who gives birth to the Theotokos (literally "God-bearer"). Matter is attracted to its own form-idea, and "when the idea – *natura naturans* – radiates through the petrified *natura naturata* the latter breathes the ardor of desire, surges with the foment of love. Such is the pan-eroticism of nature."<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the world in its given form differs from Sophia, inasmuch as a potentiality differs from its idea, since "the world is Sophia in its foundation, but is not Sophia in its condition."<sup>22</sup> Elaborating his conception of Sophia, Bulgakov arrives at the Cosmic Sophia, the pulsating material being-nonbeing, which aligns his doctrine with the pantheism and paganism characteristic of vernacular religiosity:

Great mother, damp earth! In you are we born, by you are we nourished, you we tread with our feet, into you we return. Children of the earth, love your mother, kiss her ecstatically, drench her with your tears, shower her with your sweat, quench her with your blood, sate her with your bones!<sup>23</sup>

It is worth noting that Fedorov's cosmism is wholly consistent with the Sophiological ambition to vindicate matter without departing from Christian doctrine. But unlike Florensky and Bulgakov, both Orthodox priests, Fedorov is less concerned with preserving the internal logic of the Christian dogmatics, and is far more focused on the project of the transformation of the world. Thus, his cosmism is not a form of crypto-immanentism, as is the case with Sophiology, but is overt immanentism. This was already evident to Bulgakov, who viewed Fedorov's ideas as a manifestation of economism and magism, which represent two different forms of pure immanentism. Moreover, according to Bulgakov, "Fedorov's teaching is precisely what Marx had but vaguely dreamed of,"<sup>24</sup> "a magical-economic kingdom of this world."<sup>25</sup>

### III. Marxist Self-Realization of Humankind as a Gnostic and Magic-Alchemic Magnum Opus

As evidenced by Bulgakov's work *Karl Marx as a Religious Type*, the Marxist project was at times received as a project of the sacralization of natural, material, and social conditions – an immanentist project of a very specific kind. Perhaps this could be accounted for in part by the fact that Marx's ideas dovetailed with an enthusiastic view of double belief as the

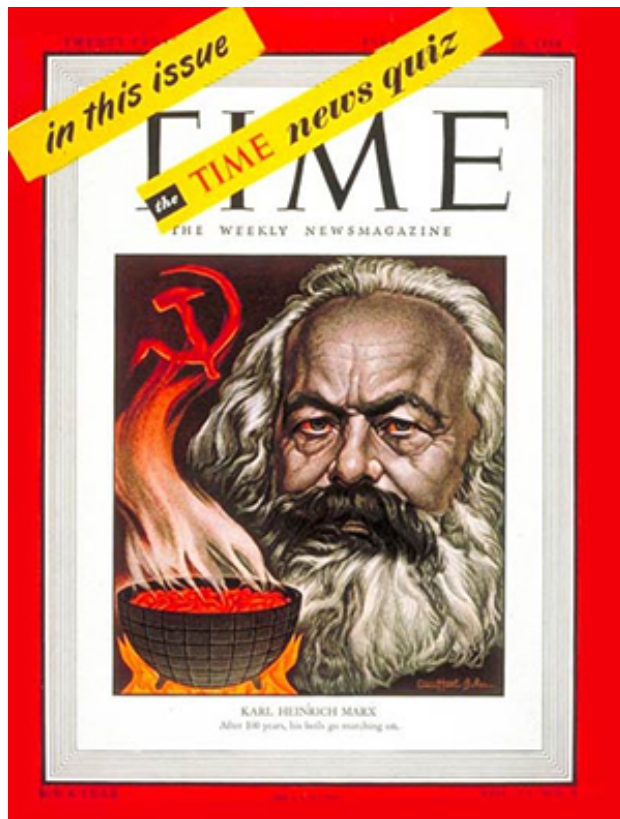
foundation of popular religiosity. Another explanation is that the Marxist idea that the human being's self-realization is the end goal of history was itself interpreted as a kind of immanentism. Marx's texts were subjected to gnostic and mystical-chemical readings, in no small part encouraged by Marx's own extensive use of alchemical and mystical imagery.

However, parallels between Marx's philosophy and hermeticism and gnosticism run deeper still. The problem of alienation, central to Marxist anthropology and critical social thought, finds obvious echoes in gnostic mythology. According to the gnostics, the material world was created not by God, but by a Demiurge (the main archon, "Yaldabaoth"); evangelion-light (gnosis-knowledge) rouses the "spiritual" people ("pneumatics"), who, having destroyed the malevolent world, reunite with God, i.e., overcome alienation. Thus, gnosticism may be seen as an ontology, anticipating and entailing a revolution, while Marxism, in turn, may be described as political gnosticism.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, the hermetic tradition, revived in Europe by the humanists in the Renaissance era, asserted a total homology between the world and the human being. The text of *The Emerald Tablet*, ascribed to the father of

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hermeticism, Hermes Trismegistus, proclaims, "That which is above is like to that which is below," meaning a human being can change the world by transforming himself – through intellectual work, among other kinds – and vice versa. This led to efforts at transforming the world and attaining human power through magic, astrology, spiritual mysticism, and alchemy. In this context, moreover, external alchemy (transmutation of matter) is inseparable from internal alchemy (transfiguration of consciousness), i.e., a material act is inseparable from a discursive one. There are those who believe that Marx inherited the heretical-hermetic tradition from Hegel, whose speculative philosophy could be connected to hermetic mysticism.<sup>27</sup> The debt is particularly evident in Marx's concept of human self-realization or self-fulfillment.<sup>28</sup> The language of hermetic or philosophic alchemy is used extensively in *Capital*, especially in its opening chapters. And while David Harvey contends that Marx's use of alchemical terms is strictly metaphorical, the process of self-realization and the various stages of economic history – such as the emergence of commodity exchange or the development of the value-form – may well be read as a description of a global socio-



Ernest Hamlin Baker, *Karl Marx*, *Time* magazine cover, February 23, 1948. Gouache on board. 10.25x9.5 in.

alchemical Opus Magnum (the Great Work or magisterium – the way to perfection).

It is worth recalling that magical-alchemical views, influential in Europe since the Renaissance, are, in the context of this discussion, nothing short of immanentism. The mage and the adept of hermetic alchemy seek the philosopher's stone, that is, power over the forces of nature. It is no coincidence that the roots of positivist science in modern Europe stretch back to alchemy. At the outset, alchemy craved two things: power over the forces of nature, and immortality. This way, so its adepts believed, lay the path to human happiness, wrought by our own hands.

This alchemical unconscious makes Marxism a tactical ally of all immanentism, including that of the Sophiologists, who strove toward a transformation of the world and a "redemption of matter." For philosophers familiar with the Western traditions of esotericism, mysticism, and gnosis (such as Soloviev and Fedorov), the Marxist project of human self-realization and his theory could well be seen as analogs to the magical-alchemical Magnum Opus, with humankind taking the role of the collective alchemist and the historical process itself as the Great Work. After all, the objective of any magisterium is self-creation, i.e., power over one's own fate.

### Conclusion

Popular religiosity, Sophiology with its Fedorovian, cosmist charge, and the alchemical unconscious of Marxist theory are the three distinct but in some ways related "holy families" of Russian immanentism. On the level of ideas, the various members of these families are easily coupled and hybridized, despite their heterogeneity. In consequence, we witness the emergence of a kind of ideological field of integral immanentism in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Various kinds of immanentism, including some perfectly secular varieties, evince a distinct dialectic: the emancipation from the transcendent principle is accompanied by a manifest (or implicit) sacralization of the immanent world. The diminution of the transcendent principle as a gradual "death of God" over the course of the entire modern age was general, but in Russia these processes were accompanied by a radical sacralization of the immanent – or, if we take popular religiosity into account, its re-sacralization, a rediscovery of the very sacral nature of the material world and of the forces operating therein, human or otherwise.

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*Translated from the Russian by Sergey Levchin*

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1  
The term “discovery of the people” belongs to Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Harper and Row, 1978).

2  
See, for example, Izmail Sreznevsky, “Testament of the Paisieviski Sbornik Concerning the Pagan Superstitions of the Russian People,” *Moskvityanin*, no. 5 (1851): 52–64. See also Nikolai Galkovsky, *The Struggle of Christianity Against the Remnants of Paganism in Ancient Rus* (Kharkov, 1916). (In Russian)

3  
Yevgeny Golubinsky, *History of the Russian Church* (Tip. Lissnera i Romana, 1880–1911). (In Russian)

4  
The monastic or “black” clergy, hewing to the more rigorous transcendent principles, was drawn largely from the aristocracy, whereas the “white” or parish clergy was more secular, sharing many aspects of their parishioners’ belief systems.

5  
Gleb Uspensky, *Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Goslitzdat, 1955–1957), 117. (In Russian)

6  
Sergey Smirnov, *The Old Russian Father Confessor* (Sergiev Posad, 1899). (In Russian)

7  
Sorokin had previously used the image of copulation with the earth in his novel *The Norm*, written in 1979 and published in 1983.

8  
The earliest presumed source text of this nature is the *Discourse of a Certain Lover of Christ and Zealot of the True Faith*, dated by various scholars to a period between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries. See also *Sermon on the Plagues of God*, attributed to Theodosius of Pechersk (eleventh century).

9  
Among these were the Narodniki (Populists) movement. See also *The General Assembly*, a newspaper for Old Believers, published by Herzen, Ogarev, and Kelsiev as a supplement to their *Kolokol* in 1862–64; and *Dawn*, a newspaper for religious sectarians put out by the RSDLP in 1904. For further reading, see Nikolay Smirnov, “Shaman, Schismatic, Necromancer: Religious Libertarians in Russia,” *e-flux journal*, no. 107 (March 2020) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/107/321338/shaman-schismatic-necromancer-religious-libertarians-in-russia/>.

10  
Boris Rybakov, *Paganism of the Ancient Slavs* (Nauka, 1981); Nikolai Nikolsky, *Selected Works in the History of Religion* (Mysl,

1974). (In Russian). Other studies, such as Boris Uspensky and Yuri Lotman, “The Role of Dual Models in Russian Cultural Dynamics,” in *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, ed. J. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskij (University of Michigan, 1984), 3–35, affirmed that the mismatch in the rates of acceptance of new religious ideas among different social strata leads to social upheavals, albeit with more subtlety and equivocation.

11  
Rybakov, *Paganism of the Ancient Slavs*, 517.

12  
Cited in Alexey Kozyrev, *Soloviev and the Gnostics* (S.A. Savin pub., 2007), 109. (In Russian)

13  
Cited in Alexander Glazkov, “Concerning the Religious Foundations of Soloviev’s Eschatology,” *Soloviev Studies* 27, no. 3 (2010): 62. (In Russian)

14  
Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* (1914), 391. (In Russian)

15  
Florensky, *Pillar and Ground*, 753, note for page 326.

16  
Sergey Bulgakov, “Principal Problems of the Theory of Progress,” in *From Marxism to Idealism* (Common Cause Society pub, 1903), 149. (In Russian)

17  
Compare with the Mercurial (Divine) and Luciferian (Antichrist) hermaphrodite in the early fifteenth-century Christian-chemical treatise *Book of the Holy Trinity*.

18  
“As readily as he drowns personal individuality in the ‘generic being’ in the name of ‘human emancipation,’ he also abolishes national consciousness, a people’s collective identity, that of his own people, no less.” Cited in Sergey Bulgakov, “Karl Marx as a Religious Type,” in Sergey Bulgakov, *Collected Works*, vol. 2 (Nauka, 1993), 262. (In Russian)

19  
Sergey Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, vol. 1 (Isskustvo, 1999), 23.

20  
Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, 204.

21  
Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, 227.

22  
Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, 202.

23  
Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, 175.

24  
Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, 317.

25

Compare with Jesus’s words: “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). Subsequently, the Sophiologist Lev Karsavin would formulate the platform of the left-wing Eurasianists as a synthesis of Fedorov and Marx. For further reading, see Nikolay Smirnov, “Left-Wing Eurasianism and Postcolonial Theory,” *e-flux journal*, no. 97 (February 2019) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/97/252238/left-wing-eurasianism-and-postcolonial-theory/>.

26  
Nicholas Thorp, “Marxism as Political Gnosticism,” *Epoch Journal*, Spring 2018.

27  
Cyril Smith, *Karl Marx and the Future of the Human* (Lexington Books, 2005).

28  
Marx introduces the concept of “*Selbstbetätigung*” in his *German Ideology*, while some of its elements are described earlier in *Capital* without a specific term attached.