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V Poiskakh Bessmertiya. Fedorovskoye Religiozno-Filosofskoye Dvizhenie [In the Search for Immortality. Fedorov's Religious-Philosophic Movement]. Boris Knorre. Moscow: LKI Publishing, 2008. 192 pp. Paperback \$5 USD. ISBN 978-5-382-00560-7.

The Russian thinker Nickolas Fedorov's movement can be classified as a manifestation of alternative spirituality. That being said, the movement clearly differs from traditional, historical confessions, and from most contemporary new religious movements. As the author shows, Fedorov's movement is rather amorphous and plastic in its structure, with no strict hierarchy or formal membership. Having its foundation in the Christian tradition, the movement draws from the heritage of Russian religious philosophy of the "Silver Age." It also draws on the idea of an all-embracing unity, a belief few hold nowadays.

At the same time, Fedorov's movement can be seen as a Russian analog of the New Age. According to Knorre's data, at least half of movement participants adhered to various mystical, theosophical and occult trends. This tendency is also characteristic of recent Russian mystical organizations such as the Federation of the Common Affair of Yury Pogrebinsky and the School of the Seventh Beam of the Age of Aquarius.

But these movements also retain aspects of Russian Orthodoxy. Knorre shows that Fedorov's movement was shaped by an effort to modernize and rationalize Orthodoxy, especially an effort to recast certain Orthodox ideas according to the paradigms of positivism and scientism. This is why the author characterizes Fedorov's movement as a "quasi-Orthodox trend, rationalistic in the character of its typical religiousness" (p. 133). A key expression for interpreting Fedorov's movement is "active Christianity," as Fedorov's followers try to interpret Christian doctrine in a progressive sense, attributing "program of actions" to all spheres of life – science, culture and politics.

The significance of Knorre's work is that his analysis of Fedorov's movement highlights the process of interaction between two different world-view paradigms. The first is Christian and paternalist, and is expressed in the respect given to traditions and historical authorities and in the dominance of mystical-meditative look at the world as a perfect creation of God. The second is rationalist-transforming, a kind of Promethean doctrine which interprets the human being as an active participant in history and an architect of his own happiness.

Fedorov's followers mix traditional ideas about the relationship between God and humanity with ideas about God as the "starter of an evolutionary program." In the words of the author, "in Fedorov's movement, the paternalistic relations between God and humanity characteristic of traditional Orthodoxy are exchanged for trade-agreement relations!" (p. 100-101). Fedorov's movement embodies a trait that is typical for a human

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being of the technological age, namely a distrust of anything that is not made by his own hands. We may add here that Fedorov's movement confirms a statement made by H. Arendt that "technogenic man" is unable to accept his being as "a free gift from nowhere," and longs to articulate it as a product of his own activity. In Arendt's words, "the more developed is a civilization, the more at home people feel themselves in this artificial milieu – the more alien for them is everything not produced by themselves and sent down to them simply and mystically."

As Knorre shows, in working out a paradigm for the transformation of society and the regulation of nature, Fedorov's movement borrows vocabulary from the Christian tradition. This religious language ennobles Fedorov's scientism and his technogenic approach, forming them into an attractive shape for the religious mentality; it provides an example of presenting modernist tasks in a kind of archaic "noble suit." The author demonstrates that, for the most part, leaders of Fedorov's movement positioned themselves at various moments as mouthpieces of the Christian tradition, applying dogmas of the Church as arguments for their ideas, thus evoking the support of the institute of the Church. Nowadays, it is favored because of the current ideological and political situation in Russia.

But the main idea that made Fedorov's movement famous and rather attractive for many people was an idea of eternal youth, and may the immortality of the human being and his resurrection after the death. "Active Christianity," as interpreted by the followers of Fedorov's movement, supposes that if a human being is immortal, he should seek it via various methods, considering it possible and necessary. Within the movement there are differences in understanding as to whether a soul can exist without a body or a body can exist without a soul, and what is the immortality of human being itself. Some movement participants suggested freezing bodies until the time comes for their resurrection, including a resurrection scenario in which one is resurrected with scientific methods.

Biomedical technologies, cloning and so on are, in a sense, part of human progress. Transformation of humankind includes traits of the noosphere, the Heavenly Kingdom and the age of robots at the same time. Thus one of the promoters of Fedorov's movement in the 1910s and 1920s, V.N. Muraviev (who was shot in 1929), supposed that "new bodies will be created that will possess much more plasticity, might, solidity, mobility," and they "will move with great speed without outer tools; they will feed themselves directly with light and they will not be a subject of the law of gravitation in modern sense.... Finally, a modern body, composed of groups of electrons, will be completely removed, and there will be only an electric body as a centre or a seat of electric forces" (p. 125-126). Knorre rightly notes that Fedorov's vision of perspectives

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on humankind was close to the notion propounded by K.E. Tsiolkovsky on the creation of the “race of geniuses,” later developed by V.I. Vernadsky to include the notion of autotrophic feeding, and the ideas of Catholic theologian P. Teilhard de Chardin on the “Omega” point where humankind will regain its paradisiacal existence after the realization of the God’s plan for the evolution of life from the “Alpha” point.

Nowadays, the study of Fedorov’s movement is quite active in the wake of the growth of information technology, and in the wake of the development of ideas of trans-humanism and nanotechnologies. Knorre’s work provides a complete picture of the movement during all periods of its existence – from its ideological premises in the works of Fedorov, to the origin and the development of the movement in the twentieth century, to its contemporary state at the threshold of the twentieth-twenty first centuries. In the Chapter I the author provides a short excursus on the essence Fedorov’s ideas and then comments on those developed later in the works of his followers. A special section is devoted to a description of the process of the shaping and evolution of “Fedorov societies” over the course of a hundred of years starting with the genesis of the movement. The Chapters II and III analyze the doctrine of the “common affair” from the point of view of its philosophical bases (its ontology, gnoseology, anthropology) and its ethical components. The author observes specific religious utopian “projects for influencing the world” in their interrelatedness with issues of social ethics, theodicy, the sense of human sufferings and dreams about “common happiness” popular in the Russian religious mentality. Finally, in the Chapter IV, he concludes by discussing the development of “traditional” Russian philosophy; ideas of all-unity, conciliarism and nationalist humanism by Fedorov’s followers.

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