

Slavyanofilstvo, *славянофильство*, **Slavophilism** (Russian). Also referred to as *slavofilia* (from Greek “love of Slavs”). An intellectual movement in Russia starting from the early decades of the 19th century, emphasizing the cultural self-sufficiency of the Russian (or more broadly: Slavic) civilization, and strongly opposing any foreign (predominantly Western) influences. The main theoretical opponents of *slavophiles* in Russia were the so-called *zapadniki* (“westerners”).

Slavyanofilstvo as a distinct philosophical position largely developed as a natural reaction to the radical views of Peter Chaadaev, who published his “Philosophical Letters” in 1836, with unadulterated admiration of the Western history and the notorious disparagement of the Russian cultural heritage. Although never an organized group of thinkers with a clearly defined program, the *slavophiles*, nonetheless, shared certain general views. First, the idealization of the Russian state prior to reforms of Peter the Great in the beginning of the 18th century. Secondly, the insistence on a unique historical mission of the Russian state (see *Samobitnost*’), which cannot be directly compared to those of the European countries, let alone modeled on the western standards. Thirdly, the belief in the underlying unity of all Slavic nations as well as an assumption that Slavic fate is unthinkable without Orthodox Christianity as its main spiritual root.

A number of influential Russian philosophers, historians, writers, poets and literary critics have adopted the ideals of *slavyanofilstvo* to a greater or lesser degree. The most famous Russian *slavophiles* include: Aleksey Khomyakov (1804-60), Ivan Kireevsky (1806–56), Konstantin Aksakov (1817–60), Ivan Aksakov (1823 -1886), Fedor Tyutchev (1803-1873), Iurii Samarin (1817-1886 and (with important qualifications) Fedor Dostoevsky (1821-1881).

In some of its extreme forms *slavyanofilstvo* would develop into narrow ethnocentrism and nationalism, although this radical attitude was always foreign to the key proponents of the movement in the 19th century. (**Andrei Zavaliiy**)

‘Slavophilism’ has two meanings, depending on if it is used in Russia or in Slav countries outside Russia. In Slav countries outside Russia, ‘Slavophilism’ is a generic term for all pro-Slav movements, including Pan-Slavism. In Russia, Slavophilism is restricted to certain thinkers. Russian Pan-Slavism adopted certain themes of the Russian Slavophiles though it did not consciously overtake Slavophile ideals.¹ Still, Slavophilism can be seen as the precursor of Pan-Slavism, because it is the first movement coming to terms with questions of Slav cultural identity. The problem is rather that the Russian Slavophiles manifested, in general, no solidarity with the Western Slavs (apart from the period of the Crimean War) and developed their themes into a kind of imperial “Pan-Russianism.” This is especially true for the period following the war against Turkey (mid 1870s) where ideologies became racist (see Pan-Turkism).

Slavophilism is connected with Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* that was in the air at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For Schelling nature was spiritual, an idea that could be played out against Kant's, Hegel's, and Luther's rationalism. Romantic theories of organicism were popular in the nineteenth century and Khomiakov's definition of the church as an organic unity is a logical derivation of these ideas.

A main contribution of the Slavophiles to the history of philosophy is the division of mankind into cultures. In this they precede Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) and Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975).² On the basis of their considerations an outline of principles of an original, independent, and self-contained Slavic culture became possible. The "authentic character" (*samobytnost*) and "own consciousness" (*samosoznanie*) not only of Russian, but of any culture were put forward as most important principles for the consideration of world culture.

The particularism generated by the Slavophiles probably made a later Pan-Slavist unification impossible. The Slavophiles' image as "provincial gentry," their emphasis on traditions of the Russian peasantry as well as on Orthodox themes was unacceptable for non-Russian Pan-Slavs. Their reputation for being romantic, nationalist, and reactionary is certainly not unfounded. On the other hand, it is impossible to deny them some originality that exceeds a purely nationalist agenda. It is through the Slavophiles that Russia could emerge as the first non-Western nation to challenge Eurocentric models in history and philosophy. **(TBB)**

Notes:

1. The Slavophiles were simply not sufficiently known in Czechoslovakia at that time, and especially non-Russian Pan-Slavism has been developed relatively independently by Czech and Slovak scholars. Cf. Milojkovic-Djuric 1994.
2. Cf. Boro-Petrovich 1956, 35. According to MacMaster, also Nineteenth Century historians like H. Rückert, G. Gervinius and C. von Rotteck worked on lists of civilizations. Robert MacMaster: *Danilevsky: A Russian Totalitarian Philosopher*. Harvard University Press, 1967.

(See also: **zapadnichestvo, Eurasianism, Pan-Slavism**)

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