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The Essence of Russian Imperialism in the Thought of Władysław Studnicki

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Abstract: *The subject of this article is the presentation of the essence of Russian imperialism in the thought of Władysław Studnicki. It seems that in today's geopolitical situation, the issues related to the analysis of Russia's expansion have become extremely important. The author of this article assumed that the thoughts formulated on the subject by the above-mentioned thinker remain valid today. The method used to verify the hypothesis was a critical analysis of source texts and an aspect analysis of one of the Polish researchers of the history and political system of Russia.*

Introduction

Looking at policies from a certain historical distance, from the perspective of "long duration", in particular of certain ideological systems, leads to noticing certain repetitive patterns in it. Referring to a certain ideological legacy as well as the crystallization and interpretation of great ideas is a kind of colour of policies, which can also be used to restore formally overcome and rejected orders. For this reason, it is worth carrying out a kind of "historical inventory" in the social sciences and humanities from time to time. According to some modern researchers, the old may be forgotten, but it does not have to be out-

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dated. On the contrary, it is possible to indicate the contemporary cognitive values of interpretative schemes drawn from the tradition of political thought, which can facilitate many contemporary phenomena in policies¹.

Taking the aforementioned repetition as the starting point may lead to the desirability of undertaking the reconstruction of the essence of Russian imperialism in the thought of Władysław Studnicki.

The war that has been going on in Ukraine since 2022 (preceded by the illegal annexation of the Crimea by Russia in 2014) has caused changes in the perception of the international order in its current shape. Thus, in today's geopolitical situation, the issues related to the analysis of Russia's expansion have become extremely important.

The aggressive actions of the Russian Federation towards its eastern neighbour observed today should be perceived as an echo of slogans and actions already well established in the history of international relations. It seems, therefore, that for this reason it is worth following the thoughts formulated on the essence of Russian imperialism by an eminent geopolitical analyst, who undoubtedly was Władysław Studnicki.

The author of this article, therefore, assumes that the thoughts formulated by the above-mentioned thinker on the subject remain valid today. The method used to verify the hypothesis was a critical analysis of source texts and an aspect analysis of one of the Polish researchers of the history and political system of Russia.

Eastern Despotic Regimes as Prototypes of the Formation of Russian Imperialism

Analysing the genesis and character of the Russian imperialism, Studnicki noticed the problem of the despotic system of exercising power taking root in this country throughout the centuries. Analysing the genesis and character of Russian imperialism, Studnicki noticed the problem of the despotic system of exercising power taking root in this country throughout the centuries. Undoubtedly, it resulted from the formation of a system in the Grand Duchy of Moscow that drew its identity directly from the patterns distinctive of a typically Asian despotism. Like Feliks Koneczny², Studnicki also paid attention in this

¹ M. Karwat, *O cyklach integracji, dezintegracji i integracji w życiu politycznym*, «Studia Politologiczne» 2022, vol. 66, pp. 9–10.

² See F. Koneczny, *Cywilizacja turańska Rosji*, Komorów 2020 and, in particular; M. Kuriański, *Cywilizacja turańska w ujęciu Feliksa Konecznego (1862–1949) ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem kultury moskiewskiej*, Wrocław 2014.

respect not only to the significance of the Mongol influence brought by the Tatar invasions, but also to the influence of Chinese or Byzantine political solutions³.

In the 13th century, the Mongols of Genghis Khan and his successors conquered a huge part of Eurasia and, de facto, created the Chinese state there. Ruling directly in the area from Beijing to the Black Sea, they enabled the Grand Duchy of Moscow to take over the idea of expansion and world domination in the following centuries. Nowadays, the innovations acquired by the Russians at that time include geographic knowledge about the vast areas of Eurasia and the described system of exercising power (also by Studnicki). It was to combine absolute obedience to the ruler (also forced by terrorizing the subjects) with tolerance in religious and cultural matters⁴.

The author of "The History of the State System of Russia" vividly analysed the mechanism of mental, administrative and political dependence of Russians on the Eastern political models. "The Tatar yoke forced Moscow to bow before the authorities, to their unconditional obedience. Its influence was so dominant because it coincided with the formation of the Russian statehood"⁵.

In Studnicki's opinion, the despotic system of power developed in Moscow was to steer not only external expansion in practice, but also the way of thinking and functioning the entire Russian society. "The psychology of the Russians was shaped by despotism"⁶.

The author of the "History of the State System of Russia" referred to Montesquieu's views when considering these issues, pointing out that the basic binder of the despotic state was fear and the terror that aroused it. This was accompanied by other inseparable components of the tsarist system of power, such as complaints and informing or trampling on human dignity. He also pointed out the idolatrous attitude of the Russians towards their rulers, often resulting from subconscious mental processes⁷.

³ W. Studnicki, *Historia ustroju państwowego Rosyi*, t. I, Lwów 1906, pp. 38–63. See also A. Wierzbicki, *Groźni i wielcy: polska myśl historyczna XIX i XX wieku wobec rosyjskiej despotii*, Warsaw 2001, pp. 100–101.

⁴ See on this topic especially R. Szul, *Wojny i podboje jako mechanizmy transferu innowacji (od Sargona Wielkiego do Wehrnera von Brauna)*, «Przegląd Geopolityczny» 2020, vol. 34, pp. 25–27 and W. Studnicki, *Historia ustroju państwowego...*, pp. 41–45.

⁵ W. Studnicki, *Historia ustroju państwowego...*, p. 45. The influence of Mongolian political traditions on the political system of Russia was also noticed by other authors, including those associated with the national camp. See especially S. Grabski, *Rewolucja: studium społeczno-psychologiczne*, Warsaw 1921, p. 14; O. Bergman, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec problematyki żydowskiej w latach 1918–1929*, Poznań 1998, pp. 296–297 or G. Zackiewicz, *Polska myśl polityczna wobec systemu radzieckiego 1918–1939*, Cracow 2004, pp. 74–75.

⁶ W. Studnicki, *Historia ustroju państwowego...*, p. 72.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 71. See also M. Figura, *Rosja w myśli politycznej Władysława Studnickiego*, Poznań 2008, pp. 86–87.

In the Studnicki's opinion, the despotic system of exercising power developed in Moscow was, in practice, to steer not only external expansion, but also the way of thinking and functioning of the entire Russian society. The reception of the aforementioned models of power, which was the most obvious denial of the values of Western culture, was in practice to make the Russians and other peoples conquered by them simply slaves to a gigantic empire⁸.

Recognizing the importance of the aforementioned threats, Studnicki treated the so-called Mongolism as a synonym of eastern barbarism and civilization stagnation⁹. It seems that they eventually took the form of a directive addressed by this thinker to Poles: "it is better for our nation to perish, it is better to become Germanized than to go to the Mongols for manure"¹⁰. The Russians themselves were supposed to be "Mongols" for him, but not so much in terms of ethnicity, but in terms of their political system¹¹.

According to Studnitsky, an important expression of the superiority of state factors over social ones was the dominance in the inner life of the factors, controlled by the tsarist despotism that favoured external expansion. The transformation of the local Duchy of Moscow into a global empire was to be made possible by the fundamental glue of that form of statehood and by interconnected phenomena, such as bureaucratism, fiscalism and militarism¹².

Contemporary researchers point out that the author of the "Polish case" emphasizes the issue of shaping internal relations in Russia by the tsarist administration from the point of view of military and fiscal goals. As a result, the Russian nobility received very limited rights from the monarch who exercised absolute power. The intelligentsia, on the other hand, joined the ranks of the ruthless bureaucracy subordinated to the ruling class, whose policy supported the Russian bourgeoisie in its economic expansion. Studnicki pointed out the importance of the protectionism of the Russian state in the economic sphere. In his opinion, apart from the conquests of the tsarist empire in Asia,

⁸ W. Studnicki, *Historia ustroju państwowego...*, pp. 42–45 and below and the same: *Z przeżyć i walk*, [in:] *Pisma wybrane*, vol. I, prepared for printing, with an introduction and footnotes by Jacek Gzella, Toruń 2000, pp. 46–49.

⁹ Some authors point out that the anti-Russian nature of Studnicki's political thinking had a strictly emotional background, which was his fundamental political sin and the cause of his mistakes, even if he used a whole set of arguments to defend his position. See for example: P. Kimla, *Antyrosyjskość myśli politycznej Władysława Studnickiego na tle terażniejszości polskiej polityki wschodniej*, «Politeja» 2005, no. 2(4), pp. 480–487.

¹⁰ W. Studnicki, *Z przeżyć i walk...*, p. 49.

¹¹ See M. Figura, *Rosja w myśli politycznej...*, p. 87; A. Wierzbicki, *Groźni i wielcy...*, pp. 100–101.

¹² W. Studnicki, *Historia ustroju państwowego...*, pp. 82–86; the same, *Sprawa polska*, Poznań 1910, pp. 33–34.

the aforementioned public interventionism contributed to the sale of goods produced in Russia, which in practice were of low quality¹³.

The Russian threat to the world order was a consequence of the awareness of the local society, which was mostly supposed to support the policy of external expansion. The Russian state form penetrated the mentality of, virtually, all Russians, who as a result were convinced of the superiority of the local absolutist system over Western models. They were attached to the tradition of tsarist autocracy, which was strengthened by Russian Orthodoxy representing the Byzantine tradition¹⁴.

The Expansion of the Tsarist Empire in the Opinion of Studnicki

Assessing the issues concerning the scale of development of Russian imperialism on the part of the centuries-old geopolitical opponent of the Republic of Poland, Studnicki referred to the estimates made in this respect by the Russian general Alexiy Kuropatkin. The aforementioned Minister of War in the tsarist state estimated that in the two centuries preceding the outbreak of World War I, peace in Russia had lasted only 71 years and 8 months. The remaining 128 years and 4 months (before 1914) had been a period filled with various military conflicts in terms of range, scale and causes. Dividing the aforementioned wars according to the motives behind their initiation, the long-time Minister of War pointed out, primarily, the desire to expand the Russian borders. In this regard, Kuropatkin marked the fact that, in his opinion, the 22 wars had lasted a total of 101 years. The second place, in terms of the time criterion, was occupied by military interventions undertaken by the units of the Russian army, which (lasting 10 years in total) were intended to pursue the general political goals of the tsarist empire. On the other hand, the reasons lying on the side of Russia's internal situation were the result of fighting two wars within 6 years and 8 months. Suppression of uprisings in the tsarist empire had lasted a little less (6 years in total). Armed conflicts of a defensive nature (i.e. those aimed at defending Russia's borders) had consumed the least amount of time. In the light of the estimates made by the Tsar's Minister of War, Kuropatkin, four wars had only lasted four and a half years¹⁵.

¹³ See especially J. Gzella, *Zaborcy i sąsiedzi Polski w myśli społeczno-politycznej Władysława Studnickiego (do 1939 roku)*, Toruń 1998, pp. 35–36 and W. Studnicki, "Polityka polska i odbudowa państwa polskiego". *Odpowiedź na książkę P. Dmowskiego*, Warsaw 1925, pp. 4–5.

¹⁴ See *ibidem* and M. Figura, *Rosja w myśli politycznej...*, pp. 80–82.

¹⁵ W. Studnicki, *Rosja Sowiecka w polityce światowej*, Wilno 1932, p. 1.

Impressive from the point of view of the implementation of the grand imperial strategy was making Russia (by the rulers of this state) a great geopolitical power in the eighteenth century. Despite the defeat regarding the conquest of China, it was achieved primarily thanks to the capture of the coasts of both the Baltic and Black Seas, and (already in the following century) of the Caucasian area¹⁶.

An extremely important element of the implementation of the Russian imperial strategy was also the partitioning of Poland in the 18th century. The annihilation of the state entity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was an extremely important step on Moscow's path to creating a multinational empire. According to Studnicki, the tsarist state benefited most from the partitions of his homeland in the 18th century. As he emphatically stated, "Poland's political existence died at the hands of Russia, and it was Russia that mainly counteracted reforms that could revive Poland's power"¹⁷.

Studnicki attached great importance to the geostrategic significance of the aforementioned conditions, treating them as a fundamental challenge on the way to regaining independence by Poland. Concluding the essence of the geopolitical concepts that were formulated by his mentor, Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz pointed out "eighty percent of our state territory belongs to Russia," cried Studnicki. – "The question of Poland's independence is a question of beating up Russia. All our uprisings were directed against Russia. The Polish state cannot be established without its territories that Russia possesses"¹⁸.

In Studnicki's opinion, due to the partitions of the Republic of Poland in the 18th century, a separate centre of power in Europe, previously calculated in the game for the balance of influence, was liquidated. At the same time, thanks to reaching a common border with Prussia and Austria, a state of specific geopolitical solidarity was created among all three partitioning powers¹⁹.

Owing to the significant strengthening of its imperial position (due to the partition of Poland), the tsarist empire was able to develop its expansion, in particular towards the Bosphorus and the Balkans. Due to fighting against the influence of revolutionary France and the era of Napoleonic wars, Russia began to occupy a very strong position in Europe and was drawn into the whirlpool of policies and world rivalry. Admittedly, Moscow's ambitious imperial plans

¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 2–3.

¹⁷ W. Studnicki, *Sprawa polska...*, p. 11.

¹⁸ S. Mackiewicz-Cat, *Historia Polski od 11 listopada 1918 do 17 września 1939*, London 1992, p. 69. On Studnicki's criticism of separate geopolitical concepts that treated the alliance with Russia as a means of regaining Poland's independence, see especially: by the same author, *Ludzie, idee i czyny*, [in:] *Pisma wybrane*, vol. III, prepared for printing, with an introduction and footnotes by Jacek Gzella, Toruń 2000, pp. 126–154.

¹⁹ W. Studnicki, *Rosja Sowiecka w polityce...*, pp. 2–3.

were soon thwarted by the Western powers as part of the so-called Crimean War. The point here was a military action undertaken by England and France against the expansion of Russian imperialism. The reason for this action was the concern of the Western powers about the expansion of the tsarist empire, which, in their opinion, was to go beyond the geopolitical rivalry limited to the European area²⁰.

In the following years, however, Russia was able to implement successful internal reforms (such as the abolition of peasant serfdom) which strengthened the country's power. At the same time, Moscow skilfully managed to win the discrepancies among the Western powers (for example, on the issues of the American Civil War) to its advantage. It also undertook a competition for influence in Eurasian space with the British Empire on its main line of communication, which led to India²¹.

The Soviet Policy of Continuing the Development of Tsarist Imperialism

Despite the Bolshevik revolution and a completely different state structure as well as ideological foundations, the Soviet Union continued the policy of expansion of the former tsarist Russia. Russia pursued such a policy especially in those territories where it could expect the least resistance to its aggression, which posed certain threats in Eurasia. Its conquests in Asia were the basis for the expansion of this state on the European continent²². In the 1930s, the eastern empire's possessiveness was supposed to be directed towards conquering Tibet, Mongolia, Xinjiang or Manchuria. Studnicki considered the region of the Far East to be the hub of world policies, where the influences of the major powers intersected²³.

Neither the fall of tsarism nor the subsequent takeover of power by the Bolsheviks changed the thinker's conviction about the permanent threat from eastern imperialism and about the eternal antagonism of the Russian state towards Poland. Studnicki distrusted not only tsarist Russia, but also liberal-

²⁰ Ibidem. See also W. Dobrzycki, *Historia stosunków międzynarodowych w czasach nowożytnych 1815–1945*, Warsaw 1996, pp. 52–54; H. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York 1994, pp. 93–95; by the same author /Polish edition, *Dyplomacja*, Warsaw 1996, pp. 98–99.

²¹ W. Studnicki, *Rosja Sowiecka w polityce...*, pp. 4–7.

²² W. Studnicki, *Daleki Wschód w polityce światowej*, Warsaw 1930, p. 69. See more ibidem, pp. 69–103 and, by the same author, *Rosya w Azji Wschodniej*, Lwów 1904, p. 7 and below.

²³ Ibidem, p. 8; J. Gzella, *Między Sowietami a Niemcami: koncepcje polskiej polityki zagranicznej konserwatystów wileńskich zgrupowanych wokół "Słowa" (1922–1939)*, Toruń 2011.

bourgeois and revolutionary (peasants' and workers') Russia. In his opinion, this state is always interested in the implementation of territorial conquests and in the subjugation of neighbouring nations. Therefore, he consistently saw threats (and not only to Polish national interests) in the east²⁴.

According to the Polish geopolitician, to justify their expansion, the authorities of the Russian and Soviet empires were able to use various justifications over many centuries, depending on the geopolitical situation prevailing at a given moment. With all the ideological and systemic differences, there was a number of similarities there, which was supposed to prove Russia's perennial possessive tendencies. What was at stake here were both appeals to the slogans of Pan-Asianism and Pan-Slavism, to the defence of Orthodoxy, the interests of the Slavs (and Slavic national minorities), as well as the necessity of waging a constant struggle to protect the oppressed proletariat, proclaimed by the Bolsheviks²⁵.

The author of "The History of the State System of Russia" pointed out, in particular, the real significance of the neo-Slavic actions undertaken by Moscow in various periods. In his opinion, this was more than a manifestation of Russia's expansive tendencies in Europe (which the tsarism directed primarily against Turkey and Austria-Hungary). The weakening of these states by flirting with the Slavic national minorities living there was, of course, in the interest of the tsarist empire. In Studnicki's opinion, this was to be followed by the implementation of the plan of conquest of the aforementioned territories by Russia. In practice, this also meant the incorporation of the aforementioned nationalities (including Poles) into the eastern empire. Over the years, the tsar's use of neo-Slavic slogans was not only the result of the state's strength, which sought to expand outside. Starting from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the promotion of the Slavic idea started (next to nationalist slogans) to be about accelerating internal consolidation and securing Russia against external threats²⁶.

As mentioned, the Bolsheviks, on the other hand, emphasized the need to wage a constant struggle to protect the oppressed proletariat. However, they were also able to use (shown in September 1939) slogans about the defence of Slavic national minorities to justify their then aggression against Poland²⁷.

²⁴ See on this topic, for example, W. Studnicki, *Wobec grozy położenia. Międzynarodowe stanowisko Polski*, Warsaw 1920, p. 4 and below, and also, in particular, J. Gzella, *Zaborcy i sąsiedzi Polski...*, p. 85; M. Figura, *Rosja w myśli politycznej...*, p. 140 and below.

²⁵ Attention to it is drawn by J. Mysiakowska-Muszyńska, *Sowietyzacja Polski i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w myśli politycznej Władysława Studnickiego*, «Dzieje Najnowsze: kwartalnik poświęcony historii XX wieku» 2014, Sec. 46, no. 2, p. 59.

²⁶ See especially J. Gzella, *Zaborcy i sąsiedzi Polski...*, pp. 62–63.

²⁷ J. Mysiakowska-Muszyńska, *Sowietyzacja Polski...*, p. 59.

In practice, there was no country on the globe more war-oriented than Soviet Russia²⁸. The USSR was supposed to be "the most pacifist country for export"²⁹, but contrary to the officially proclaimed peace declarations in domestic politics, the Soviet authorities were in fact acting in the most militaristic manner. For they imported all materials and resources that could serve war purposes, subordinating their economy to the realization of the future war. Studnicki also noticed that the adoption of the above-mentioned strategy also served to create the economic development of the Russian state³⁰.

Because of noticing the risk of the effective impact of Bolshevik slogans, Studnicki feared the possibility of transferring the communist revolution to Polish lands³¹. This was favoured by the greater ruthlessness and lack of scruples of the communists compared to tsarism³².

In the opinion of the Polish geopolitician, the Soviet Union made preparations especially for the annexation of the territory of the Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Poland. According to Studnicki, this was to be the key to the USSR gaining the status of a major power on the European geopolitical scene³³.

As Studnicki had feared, after the end of World War II, due to geopolitical reasons and the concessions of the Western Allies to the USSR, the Sovietization of Poland, Central, and Eastern Europe took place in practice. The Polish geopolitician noticed the far-reaching effects of Soviet actions, and not only in this region of the world. The spread of Soviet imperialism led to a disturbance in the geopolitical balance of power in both Europe and Asia. Merely placing Central and Eastern Europe in the orbit of the Soviet Union's influence would not have satisfied its appetite. Since the Soviets were guided by the conquest of the whole Europe by spreading the communist revolution, the next stage of this expansion was to be the pursuit of subjugating the countries of Western Europe as well. This was to take place largely due to the use of communist parties, operating in the local area, as Soviet agents³⁴.

At the same time, the thinker was convinced that the liquidation of communism would in no way be tantamount to stopping the expansion of the USSR.

²⁸ See wider J. Gzella, *Między Sowietami a Niemcami...*, p. 127.

²⁹ W. Studnicki, *Rosja Sowiecka a rozbrojenia*, «Słowo» z 31 XII 1931, [in:] W. Studnicki, *O przymierze z Niemcami. Wybór pism 1923–1939*, ed. Jan Sadkiewicz, Cracow 2019, p. 107.

³⁰ Ibidem, pp. 107–111.

³¹ J. Mysiakowska-Muszyńska, *Sowietyzacja Polski...*, p. 59; W. Suleja, *Fałszywa prognoza polskiego germanofila*, «Sobótka» 1984, no. 2, p. 310.

³² W. Studnicki, *Rosja Sowiecka w polityce...*, p. 112.

³³ J. Gzella, *Zaborcy i sąsiedzi Polski...*, pp. 210–212.

³⁴ J. Mysiakowska-Muszyńska, *Sowietyzacja Polski...*, pp. 58–59.

Studnicki argued that the only real chance to ensure security on the European continent could be the permanent weakening and disintegration of Russia. In his opinion, it should be done by reducing its territory and fighting communism in all satellite countries, which were a tool in the hands of the USSR³⁵.

Studnicki consistently remained faithful to the above-mentioned anti-Soviet and anti-Russian political concept until the end of his life. The writer's biographer mentions that during his stay in Great Britain he planned to establish a research facility among anti-Soviet immigrants to analyse the situation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe subjected to communist dictatorship. The very old and ailing Studnicki did not manage to implement this intention³⁶.

Summary

Władysław Studnicki is now considered one of the "creators of the Polish geopolitics"³⁷, although it must be admitted that the intellectual output of this author, active as a creator of political thought for about half a century, has only recently been discovered and recalled.

Undoubtedly, Studnicki was an intellectual of great format and quite a visionary who could predict the course and far-reaching consequences of future international events with an amazing accuracy. Having the gift of an in-depth analysis of geopolitical constellations and systems of power, he devoted himself to the issue of Poland's independence, which was completely overriding him. Despite this, he never won a broader audience among his fellow citizens and failed to play any important political role. Instead of experiencing a spectacular career, he suffered a series of humiliations, defeats and failures, and was only appreciated as a political thinker after his death.

In this article, I am going to expose and confirm the thesis that Studnicki's intellectual legacy remains valid today, and the geostrategic diagnoses for-

³⁵ W. Studnicki, *Polska za linią Curzona*, London 1953, pp. 211–213. See also M. Figura, *Rosja w myśli politycznej...*, p. 268.

³⁶ P. Zychowicz, *Germanofil. Władysław Studnicki – Polak, który chciał sojuszu z III Rzeszą*, Warsaw 2020, p. 540.

³⁷ P. Eberhard, *Władysław Studnicki (1867–1953)*, [in:] the same, *Twórcy polskiej geopolityki*, Cracow 2006, pp. 101–123; S. Cenkiewicz, *Geopolityka polska (o poglądach geopolitycznych Eugeniusza Romera, Władysława Studnickiego, Henryka Bagińskiego i Jerzego Niezbrzyckiego)*, «Arcana: kultura, historia, polityka» 2000, no. 2(32), pp. 53–82; the same, *Z dziejów realizmu czyli geopolityka w Polsce*, «Niepodległość» 1996, vol. XLVIII, pp. 230–246; J. Gzella, *Myśl polityczna Władysława Studnickiego na tle koncepcji konserwatystów polskich (1918–1939)*, Toruń 1993.

mulated by him may be a useful intellectual tool today. They can be seen as a valuable key to gaining an orientation in the dynamics of contemporary international relations, especially in relation to Central and Eastern Europe (other regions of the world were also in the field of Studnicki's geopolitical interests). The analyses of this thinker concerning the process of the centuries-long Polish-Russian rivalry for ruling, as he calls it, the "core of Eurasia", seem particularly up-to-date.

However, getting acquainted with the thoughts of this former Siberian exile on the essence of Russian imperial aspirations seems to allow us to understand, in particular, Moscow's current aspirations and efforts better. Although the considerations presented in this article were formulated at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, they seem to have lost none of their validity in the context of contemporary geopolitical realities.

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