

### SPIRITUAL AND MORAL LESSONS OF DOSTOEVSKY IN THE ERA OF TRANSFORMATION OF MODERN STATES AND THE WORLD ORDER\*\*

Sergey N. Baburin<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Institute of State and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia*

<sup>2</sup> *Dostoevsky Omsk State University, Omsk, Russia*

<sup>3</sup> *Moscow Witte University, Moscow, Russia*

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The subject of the study is the literary and spiritual heritage of F. Dostoevsky.

The article is aimed at analyzing the need for spiritual and moral reform of modern states and the world order.

The research methodology includes historical and legal analysis with an interdisciplinary approach, abstraction and mental modeling, ascent from the abstract to the concrete.

The main results, scope of application. Dostoevsky brilliantly showed that the basis of society is love, that love implies freedom because it has divine-human nature. For the modern reorganization of the world, it is important to see the innermost essence of human being in freedom according to Dostoevsky. Individual status and freedom cannot be sacrificed to technology, the public needs, or the interests of the digital revolution. It is good when society relies, as Dostoevsky taught, on the Law of Christ, which becomes the inner nature of man, on the spiritual and moral traditions of the people, is built on the dignity and freedom of the individual, kindness and compassion. The freedom of the individual is the basis and principle of life of both the individual and any people. The basis of a common life should be love between individuals, and not external laws or the interests of society as such in order for the complicity of the individual in the life of society not to diminish individual dignity. At the same time, Dostoevsky consistently points out the irrationality of the nature of the individual, the impossibility of comprehending its meaning and place in society and the state by means of logical calculations only. Dostoevsky showed the futility of efforts to find an ethical criterion for the structure of a person's fate outside of religion. Even true knowledge can only be spiritual, it is identified with faith. Church membership, belonging to the Church, directly opposes egoism, which is sinful according to Dostoevsky. In terms of the development of the modern state and law these postulates imply the importance of this constitutionalization of spiritual and moral principles and institutions in the moral state, creation of constitutional bodies of spiritual and moral supervision over public power. And finally, in nation-building, it is important that its foundation remains reasonable. Following a tradition that embodies the cooperation of God and man presupposes a careful attitude to historical memory, the ability to renew within the framework of preserving the whole past.

Conclusions. Any approach to states and the world order must be based on the principle of the divine-human nature of the individual, signifying his immutability and inviolability. Reflections on the spiritual and moral features of Russia, revealed by Dostoevsky, have a universal meaning and are especially important for the development of modern states and the world order.

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\*\* The article is based on the author's speech on November 11, 2021 in Omsk at the II International Scientific Conference "Dostoevsky and the Challenges of Time".

## 1. Introduction

F.M. Dostoevsky is not just a brilliant great Russian writer, he is a man who in many ways determined the development of the spiritual life of the Russian and many other peoples. This is a person who contributed to the improvement of our archetype of national consciousness.

When honoring F.M. Dostoevsky, it is useful and instructive to pay attention to the context of his anniversary, to the modern era. Our time is amazing and unique, unique in that the history of mankind is closer than ever before to an inglorious end, that our era may end with the death of the world around us.

This will happen if we do not learn the lessons of F.M., Dostoevsky.

In the spring of 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a Speech to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, noted the fact that the world has entered a stage of absolute uncertainty. It is generated by new challenges to all mankind, the symbol of which has become a hitherto unknown pandemic. The President of the Russian Federation stressed that throughout history, our people have won, overcome trials thanks to their unity, and now family, friendship, mutual assistance, charity, unity have come to the fore for us [1].

Absolute uncertainty. That's right, there has never been a similar situation in the world in the foreseeable past. On October 21, 2021, at a meeting of the Valdai Club, the President of the Russian Federation clarified his idea. He stressed that for the first time the world has found itself in a situation where humanity can cease to exist even without nuclear conflicts for many reasons, including the loss of spiritual and moral values. Putin described the crisis experienced by humanity as conceptual and even civilizational, recognized the bankruptcy of the existing model of capitalism and called for a return in search of overcoming the crisis to the ideology of healthy conservatism and traditional values, to rethink the role of ethics in modern life [2].

And here we immediately come to F.M. Dostoevsky, to the growing relevance of his literary

heritage as a spiritual and moral heritage.

Why Dostoevsky? Because it was he who rightfully called the great poems of the human spirit in his works [3, p. 11], without proving anything, simply showed how morality, built on shaky foundations of personal arbitrariness, inevitably leads to the principle of "everything is allowed" and thereby negating all morality. It is Dostoevsky's ethical personalism, based on the religious searches of the brilliant writer, that allows us to penetrate into the depths of the human soul, which is fundamentally important for the self-salvation of today's peoples.

Some time ago, one of the sincere and long-time friends of our country, Wolfgang Schellicke, founder of the German–Russian Institute of Culture in Dresden, approached the monument to F.M. Dostoevsky on the Dresden embankment, said: "Here is a monument to a writer and a man who is still needed not only by Russia, but by us Germans. Europe needs Dostoevsky for his penetration into such depths of human consciousness, without understanding which we will be doomed to degeneration." Maybe that's why A.D. Kerimov is right, putting the cultural and educational function of the modern state to the fore in today's conditions [4, p. 163].

## 2. Love and freedom as moral criteria of law enforcement

The sociality of law enforcement is determined by its level of morality. As never before, Dostoevsky's understanding of the human personality, his soul, the orientation of the brilliant writer to a different vision of man than in European culture, when the human personality is not reducible to nature and is capable of loving to the point of self-sacrifice, have become more relevant for us [see: 5, pp. 19-30, 367]. It was Dostoevsky who brilliantly showed with artistic images that love presupposes freedom, which does not destroy either the world order or rational logic – it surpasses them, since it is God-human [5, pp. 367-368]. Dostoevsky sees in freedom the innermost essence of man. Cardinal Tomasz Szpidlik, calling him the prophet of freedom, highlights the boundlessness of freedom in

Dostoevsky, when every infringement of freedom, even minimal, is felt as an insult to the dignity of the individual [5, p. 33, 34].

Sometimes it may seem that in order to prevent serious troubles, freedom should be restricted in order to help a person make his choice, to limit freedom to a framework in which he could not harm anyone. It is this solution that the Grand Inquisitor offers to Christ in the novel "The Brothers Karamazov" ("... now these people are more confident than ever that they are completely free, and yet they themselves brought us their freedom and submissively laid it at our feet"; "there is no more painful concern for a person how to find the one who would like to give as soon as possible the gift of freedom with which this unfortunate creature is born"). In response to all his arguments, Christ is silent [6, pp. 270-288]: Because He Himself, O. T. Szpidlik reminds, has complete and unlimited freedom [for more details, see: 5, pp. 34-45]. Dostoevsky reminds modern man that only freedom is creative and transformative, God-human and kenotic. These foundations of society will disappear if the human in man is destroyed.

Hardly anyone doubts that the turn in Dostoevsky's worldview occurred during his stay at hard labor in Omsk, and his "Notes from the Dead House" marked this turn. "Radishchev and Chernyshevsky were imprisoned in Siberia as loners. The Decembrists went to hard labor with their "own" society. Dostoevsky was in hard labor with the "people". He did not recognize the people in a joint, albeit terrible, struggle on the battlefield, not in creative, albeit hard, work on the rural field, – there, in hard labor, his faith in the Russian people was strengthened. Moreover, she was born there. She went through everything, and nothing and no one could undermine her." [7] These are the words of the brilliant literary critic, the outstanding head of the Pushkin House and the Pushkin Fund "Classics", N.N. Skatov. It is noteworthy that describing another era, I.K. Jerelievskaya quotes V. Frankl about one of the lessons that he managed to learn from Auschwitz: "It consisted in the fact that those who were directed to the future, to the cause that awaited them, to the meaning had the greatest chances to survive even in such an

extreme situation which they wanted to implement" [8, p. 278]. Dostoevsky, after hard labor, began to write about the personality of a person and the meaning of life.

N.N. Skatov emphasized: "Dostoevsky, speaking about different aspects of our life, acted not just as a singer of poor people, as he is sometimes called, he acted as a master who showed both sorrow and joy in his versatility. He showed the greatness and tragedy of a simple life" [7]. And in this regard, when we talk about the relevance of Dostoevsky's moral precepts, it is because we know that the modern state and the world order are built on European rationalism, on the priority of constantly renewing interests over the values of the "old order". Established by the XXI century. The state and law are basically the fruits of secular Enlightenment, which rejected God as the center of the system of spiritual and moral coordinates.

F.M. Dostoevsky was a deeply Orthodox man and rejected nihilism with its principle: "If there is no God, then everything is allowed." The writer brilliantly showed what kind of devilry such a view of life leads to. It is not by chance that the head of the Russian state now points out the manifestations of this devilry in the West's imposition through international organizations of the rejection of traditional family and marriage, of the very concepts of "father" and "mother", "man" and "women", that you can change the gender of a man to a female, a woman to a male during your life, that both 3, 4, and other genders should be recognized, that family education should be replaced by juvenile justice [2]. Hence the great significance of the fact that last year the constitutional reform in Russia strengthened traditional values, which confirmed the continuity and continuity of history, the continuity of the Russian Federation from the USSR, the inheritance of ideals and faith in God from our ancestors (Article 67.1 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation). The duty of the state to protect the family, motherhood, fatherhood, childhood and marriage as a union of a man and a woman is constitutionally enshrined (Article 72 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

It is difficult to say what was more in the position of the President of the Russian Federation, courage or despair, when he defiantly went against

the demands of the "civilized" West in these matters. But the situation is such that if we do not gain a foothold in the positions of traditional values, we will really perish.

The millennial spiritual life of Western society has developed a "Faustian principle" – the self-affirmation of the human personality and the mobilization of its volitional principles without regard to good or evil, an attitude towards nature on the principle of its conquest, absolutized pragmatism, replacing them with the whole range of spiritual values, elevated material comfort to the rank of the goal of human life [9, p. 40]. This was combined with a Eurocentric worldview that identified European and later North American preferences with universal values. The Western world is in the stage of transition from humanism to posthumanism, gradually freeing itself from religious, class, national, class, professional collectivity, and transferring the issue of gender to the field of arbitrary individual discretion. The last step remains – to get rid of human identity, to give up its place in the biosphere to posthumanistic realities [8, p. 287]. Such a finale already has a name – the singularity as the transfer of control over progress from humans to artificial intelligence. What is the preservation and development of the human habitat as a task of technological modernization of modern society [10, p. 17], it's just about the survival of homo sapiens. The appeal to Dostoevsky is an opportunity for people to come to their senses and save the human in man.

Coronavirus is a symbol of destruction, it's not in the lungs, it's in the brain. The application of law contrary to the requirements of morality is disastrous not only for the individual, but also for the state as a legal form of self-organization of society. Dostoevsky, pointing to the Russian worship of Europe and its idols born of the Peter the Great era, and even a little earlier, wisely noted that by recognizing European priorities, "we accepted for achieving the goal what was the height of selfishness, the top of dishonor, the top of economic stupidity and disorder, the top of slander against human nature, the top of the destruction of all freedom." people" [11, p. 501].

### **3. The moral criterion in the legal**

#### **relationship**

And yet the main spiritual and moral lessons of F.M. Dostoevsky for the further state development of Russia and the whole world are not in his natural distrust of Europe and not even in his idealized ideal of social relations with the eternal "antagonism" of law and morality, but in the very scale of spiritual values that the great Russian writer elevated in his works and he left a legacy to all nations. It's not about describing the spiritual suffering that Dostoevsky's characters go through, it's about the purification of the soul that these sufferings bring them, in finding light even with darkness overflowing with hopelessness. In following the religious tradition to put the human soul and its purity above momentary benefits and interests. That is why shame is more terrible for Mitya Karamazov than accusations of murder and robbery of his father, that is why Smerdyakov pokes into the eyes of the suffering Ivan Karamazov his phrase about the fact that when there is no God, "everything is allowed."

High moral criteria are necessary not only for relations between people, but also for all social relations, all legal relations. When the state serves as a binding force of a civilized society, using public power that has emerged from society for this purpose [12, p. 176], it can successfully carry out its social task only with the moral fullness of its official functions. Dostoevsky's freedom is the embodiment of a moral idea. It is no accident that Dostoevsky's sharp satire in "Winter Notes on Summer Impressions" mercilessly rejects the morality of class egoism and self-interest, a person's refusal to serve the ideals of the common good. Unfortunately, the slogans of a market economy and democracy outside freedom have led modern Russia to absurdity, their very implementation plunges the country into nonsense [13, p. 651], behind the utilitarianism of meanings is emptiness. The truly legal character of the State acts as the legal basis for the harmony of justice and freedom, and the social character of the State becomes the very spirit of such harmony. It is in a state of harmonious interaction that justice and freedom turn out to be the objective ideological basis of a moral state [14, p. 243].

Dostoevsky's religious spirituality is conditioned by the national tradition, which is

extremely significant for Russian self-identification. It is not by chance that the tradition as such sees the collaboration of God and man [15, p. 18]. It should be agreed that tradition is a special experience of sociality, fixed in symbols, which receives its vitality from the establishment of a special symbolic connection between man and God, thanks to which a mechanism for the reproduction of sociality is established, a kind of perpetual motion machine for social forms of being [15, p. 20]. Therefore, the rejection of traditions, their oblivion or emphatic disregard lead to the termination of the existence of the corresponding nation, since it was tradition that created ethnicity. The oblivion of tradition leads to the degeneration of society, since it is tradition that forms its characteristic features and elements.

The degradation of the world order, which began with the unpunished aggression of NATO countries against Yugoslavia in 1999, is a direct result of the changed world processes, especially since globalization in various spheres of the world space proceeds not spontaneously and spontaneously, but as a thought-out and coordinated program by globalists [16, pp. 127–128]. Transnational corporations have launched a project of controlled chaos. The degradation of international relations has turned into a paralysis of international law primarily due to the spiritual and value rebirth of humanism and the centuries-old dominance of positivism in law [17, p. 76]. One can agree with the statement that international relations in the modern era have come not to a crisis of international law, but to a crisis of its enforcement [18, p. 34], the essence of the problem does not change: international law does not work or becomes unfair. A similar process occurs in the national law of those States where rulemaking breaks away from spiritual and moral precepts, where law enforcement is built regardless of the compliance of laws with natural human rights and spiritual and moral traditions of society.

The world order and modern states are being reshaped according to the patterns of evil and lack of spirituality, visionarily indicated in F.M. Dostoevsky's "Demons". Cases of legal nihilism and double international legal standards have become a frequent practice. Meanwhile, any state is called

upon to formalize legal values in legislation and orient its legal policy towards the legal values of society, without which laws lose their legal quality, and the state itself loses legitimacy [19, p. 38]. However, the values enshrined in official legal acts are not always moral. It is noteworthy that researchers have begun to study the question of whether modern Russian statehood is an imitation, when a state body or a specific organization imitates (depicts) real activity, the achievement of a goal, often the desire for general well-being, without essentially solving their tasks and not performing their own functions [20, p. 35; 21].

#### **4. Ensuring the moral meaning of life as a condition for reforming states**

It is no coincidence that the transformations of states and the world order now mean not just a shift in the balance of power or a scientific and technological breakthrough. Humanity is faced today, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasizes, with simultaneous systemic changes in all directions: from the increasingly complicated geophysical state of our planet to increasingly paradoxical interpretations of what man himself is, what is the meaning of his existence [2]. In the words of the President of the Russian Federation, it is impossible not to see a reference to the categoricity of F.M. Dostoevsky: "The secret of human existence is not only to live, but what to live for" [5, p. 277]

For example, the consequences of the absolute value priority of freedom born by the West, freedom of choice, the price of any society's rejection of the priority of the moral norm, the fact that whole generations of people, being under the charm of the theme of freedom, easily supported various kinds of innovations, including legislative ones, without thinking about the fact that the absolutization of freedom the choice in isolation from moral attitudes is, as Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia emphasized many years ago, deadly dangerous for a person and for society, because evil can also be chosen [22]. "Everything that is happening in the world today," Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia warns, "is being done not because God wants it that way, but because the devil wants it that way. His temptations and temptations

are so attractive that they not only influence the ways of our thinking and volitional attitudes, but in fact form the image of human civilization" [23, p. 711].

In the spiritual culture of many peoples, thanks to F.M. Dostoevsky, the moral meaning of human life, spiritual priorities and values have become stronger, an understanding has been formed of how good and evil differ in everyday life, how multifaceted the guises of both are. Dostoevsky, as a sincere believer in God, built his vision of man and society on Christian principles, the relevance of which is now increasing for the state and law. Constitutional reform of the Russian Federation in 2020 (especially thanks to the innovations of Article 67.1, paragraph 1, Part 1, Article 72, Part 2, Article 69, Article 75.1), having transformed the spiritual and moral content of the constitution and Russian constitutionalism, not only changed the status and powers of the highest state authorities of Russia, but also strengthened the moral framework of the Constitution itself. Relying on the Russian cultural and historical type, the reform began the return of Russia to its own national path of development [24, p. 15-16]. The civilizational meaning of the 2020 constitutional amendment as a response to the disorganization of the world order carried out in the interests of transnational corporations takes the Russian constitutional reconstruction far beyond the national framework. The changes that began in 2020 in Russia suggest the need for further spiritual and moral transformation of the modern state, and then of the entire world order. This idea provokes a skeptical expert reaction [25, pp. 238-245], but also responds to requests for the construction of an ideal [26, pp. 52-53; 27, p. 141]. Having ethical personalism and the whole complex of Dostoevsky's spiritual principles as a tuning fork of the political and legal reconstruction of society, it is necessary to carry out further ideological and systemic constitutional reform and a deep institutional reconstruction of state power, of all public power.

Today, unfortunately, under the influence of neoliberal economic fundamentalism, a prolonged rejection of traditional values, the effectiveness of public administration has been lost

in Russia. In particular, because, by the will of modern officials, it is declared unnecessary to study the "too complex" Dostoevsky in schools, although reading Dostoevsky is necessary so that "the soul grows up" [28]. Otherwise, it is impossible to raise the self-consciousness of Russian society to the heights of Russian and world thought. Public consciousness is now crushed by near-literary consumer goods. Glossy magazines and pop quasi-culture cultivate a person who is not able to reflect on the digital age. Hence the crisis of management: the faithful are appointed to leadership positions, but they are required as from the smart ones.

Over the past 35 years, Russia has found itself in a situation of dangerous imbalance of power. Only now are steps being taken to strengthen State power in the country. The constitutional reform contributes to this by its institutional changes. And there is no need to fear the empire, the imperial ideal, we must strive for them. Real empires are state forms of civilizations. The Russian state has always been a civilizational union of Slavic, Turkic, Finno-Ugric, Caucasian and other peoples, cemented by Orthodoxy, the Russian language and a common self-consciousness embodied in Russian literature. Only the acquisition of a new, modern state-legal form by such a union will be able to ensure the revival of historical Russia, the happiness and well-being of all its peoples, who from generation to generation grew up in a single cultural environment. The role of F.M. Dostoevsky's spiritual heritage in such a revival is one of the central ones.

Public relations should be based on the highest values, covering both dignity, freedoms and human rights, as well as the spiritual and moral priorities of the nation (people), including the desire for planetary harmony. And such spiritual and moral values of society in the form of legal categories should be enshrined in the constitution, that is, the state should publicly assume the duty to protect the spiritual and moral values of society. Mechanisms of public spiritual and moral control over state authorities are already being formed in society, but they need further constitutional consolidation. It is time to establish people's control over the activities of any state and municipal authorities, the foundations of which should be fixed by constitutional norms [14, p. 283]. These will be the

distinguishing features of a moral state.

### 5. Some conclusions

It is possible to talk endlessly about Dostoevsky's modern meanings, about his disclosure of the role of a person's personality subject to constitutional protection. "Is there salvation in impersonality? On the contrary, on the contrary, I say, it is not only necessary not to be an impersonality, but it is necessary to become a person, even to a much higher degree than the one that has now been determined in the West... Voluntarily putting your stomach for everyone, going to the cross for everyone, to the bonfire, can only be done with the strongest personality development" [29, p. 411], the writer's voice sounds in "Winter Notes on Summer Impressions". The spiritual legacy of the great writer is multifaceted, with some facets highlighted in "Humiliated and Insulted" or "Idiot", others in "Crime and Punishment" or "Brothers Karamazov". Dostoevsky is not static. The dynamics of his views are instructive. If we try to identify specific spiritual and moral lessons of F.M. Dostoevsky, important for the improvement of the state and law, in our era of civilizational upheavals that are changing states and the world order itself, then among the main ones can be named:

Firstly, the principle of the divine-human nature of the individual, meaning its immutability and inviolability, dignity and freedom of the individual cannot be sacrificed to any state needs, public needs or interests of the digital revolution. A direct reproach to us from the XIX century is the words of F.M. Dostoevsky that "now they are fighting not so much with weapons as with the mind" [11, p. 158].

Secondly, the Russian state and society are only prosperous when they rely on the Law of Christ, which becomes the inner nature of man, and the spiritual and moral traditions of the people are built on the dignity and freedom of the individual, kindness and compassion. The relations that create a personality cannot be limited to the state, they extend to the entire created cosmos, form the unity of humanity. In the final part of "Crimes and Punishments", in the image of the

consequences of the invasion of an "unheard-of pestilence", the hopelessness of arranging the fate of mankind on the utilitarian principles of rational theory is vividly shown.

Thirdly, a person is a person, personal freedom is the basis and principle of life for both an individual and any nation. The person is subject to unconditional constitutional protection. Personality is formed in the process of free relations, just as nations themselves are formed in the course of conscious activity of people. So that the participation of the individual in the life of the state does not belittle individual dignity, the basis of common life and state development should be love between individuals, and not external laws or the interests of society as such. At the same time, Dostoevsky consistently points out the irrationality of the nature of personality, the impossibility of comprehending its meaning and place in society and the state by means of logical calculations alone [see: 3, p. 5].

Fourth, evil is directed not so much against the "nature" of man as against the individual, it encroaches on the main qualities of the individual: freedom, truth, virtue, integrity. Egoism as a sin destroys the most essential element of personality – the connection with God, with others, with the cosmos. It is not by chance that Shigalyov in "Demons", presenting his plan of social reconstruction at the meeting, announces that "my system is not over. I am entangled in my own data, and my conclusion is in direct contradiction with the original idea... Proceeding from unlimited freedom, I conclude with unlimited despotism. I will add, however, that, apart from my permission of the public formula, there can be no" [30]. This sin of selfishness lies at the heart of private property and can only be overcome by economic equality, which the state, taking into account the sad experience of the twentieth century, is able to ensure with the development of equal individual ownership of citizens and social partnership [26; 14, pp. 328-339].

Fifth, the state should be moral, and morality should be based on the religious values of the people. In almost all of his novels, Dostoevsky showed the futility of efforts to find an ethical criterion for the arrangement of a person's fate outside of religion. A society united by love is first of all a Church. Even true knowledge can only be

spiritual, it is identified with faith. Church membership, belonging to the Church, directly opposes the sin that Dostoevsky has egoism. In terms of the development of the modern state and law, this leads to an additional justification for the importance of the constitutionalization of spiritual and moral principles and institutions in a moral state, the creation of constitutional bodies of spiritual and moral supervision over public power.

And finally, the sixth. Tradition has been and should remain the foundation of the development of the state, the basis for the improvement of law and world order. Following the tradition implies a careful attitude to historical memory and the ability to renew within the framework of preserving the whole past. This is especially significant in state-building and international relations, since modernity and postmodernity have provoked and are provoking political and legal transformations that are divorced from the cultural environment of a particular society.

F.M. Dostoevsky repeatedly and differently expressed Russian civilizational code, showed the cultural and historical features of Russia, but in such a way that reflections on them still have a universal meaning. In the novel "The Karamazov Brothers", concluding Alyosha's speech at the stone, Dostoevsky, in my opinion, formulated the credo of Russian civilization, which puts kindness and justice above formal law, and, at the same time, made this credo a testament for the all-united humanity: "First and foremost, we will be kind, then honest, and then we will never forget about each other" [5, p. 829]. These words should contain the meaning of modern state-building and the main principle of the world order.



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#### INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHOR

**Sergey N. Baburin** – Doctor of Law, Professor, Honoured Scientist of the Russian Federation; <sup>1</sup> Head Researcher – Scientific Director, Center for Integration and Civilizational Studies; <sup>2</sup> Professor; <sup>3</sup> Professor

<sup>1</sup> *Institute of State and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences*

<sup>2</sup> *Dostoevsky Omsk State University*

<sup>3</sup> *Moscow Witte University*

<sup>1</sup> 10, Znamenka ul., Moscow, 119019, Russia

<sup>2</sup> 55a, Mira pr., Omsk, 644077, Russia

<sup>3</sup> 12/1, 2-i Kozhukhovskii proezd, Moscow, 115432, Russia

E-mail: 1357343@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0002-2213-0127

RSCI SPIN-code: 1212-8135; AuthorID: 790520

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