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The metaphysics of space and nation between Johann Gottfried Herder and German political romantic in the Russian Empire

Until 1769 young Herder was resident in the Russian Empire (in Riga) and regarded Russia as his homeland. He wanted to be the personal consultant of Empress Catherine II for creating the New Code of Laws. The first drafts to his future philosophy of history Herder made in regard to Russia, according to his plans to re-build Russia. Against the background of political upheavals in Europe and the French Revolution around the turn of the 19th century, Herder's plans for Russia of creating a nation through monarchy began to attract the authorities of the Russian Empire. Herder's philosophy of history as well as German political romantic, which rose from the basis of the latter, were seen by Russian authorities as a very powerful means of preventing the French revolutionary and republican influence from penetrating into the Russian Empire. Herder's epistemological groundings of human reason and freedom allowed the Russian nation builders to position themselves with intellectually grounded arguments against constitutionalism and parliamentarianism while at the same time contextualizing the European Enlightenment through these "German eyes" and facilitating education in the Empire. The place from where German thought was to be disseminated was the universities, which were founded in the reign of Emperor Alexander I. The foundation charter of the German University of Dorpat can probably be regarded as the first historical document indicating the new Russian course. This development reached its culmination in the establishment of the Ministry of National Enlightenment and its work under the presidency of Count Sergej Uvarov, who had received his university education in Germany. Uvarov was offered this position after he had presented his memorandum on forging the Russian nation to Emperor Nikolay I in 1832 and his report on reviewing the Moscow University in the same year. On the other hand, despite the attraction Herder's plans had to Russian nation builders, putting them into practice proved to be difficult. The very methodic core within Herder's philosophy of history operates with regard to an interrelationship between individuality and universality, nationality and humanity. Individuality can only be defined from the point of the universal. So in his plans to build Russia, Herder expected from the monarch to respect the individuality of each ethnic group in multi-ethnic Russia by allowing them to cultivate their cultural traditions on their way of self-determination. In this lies the anti-imperial potential of Herder's philosophy of history which prompted Russian authorities to turn to German political romantic. At the same time, Herder's philosophy of history with its inherent relationship between particularism and universalism became the intellectual basis for the eastern Armenians (against the background of their study at the Philosophical Faculty of the University Dorpat) endeavor to gain consensus with the Russian authorities to forge the Armenian nation.

In my paper, I will first focus on Uvarov's memorandum, which reasons Russia's cultural and political space and secondly on the tensions resulting from the endeavor of

Armenian Intellectuals to gain consensus with the Russian authorities to build the Armenian nation on the basis of Herder's philosophy of history.