Russian Foreign-Policy Culture and the Horde: A Hypothesis

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Abstract
This article scrutinizes the historical impact of the Mongolian Horde on Russia's foreign policy behavior. The author comes up with a hypothesis that relations with the Horde were not only important for Russia during the critical historical period of its formation, but also largely determined its unique foreign-policy culture and practical implementation of Russian foreign policy in subsequent periods. The author maintains that the key element of this impact was peaceful integration of the powerful neighbor which posed the biggest threat to the Great Russians for more than two hundred years.

Keywords: foreign policy behavior, Horde, Russia, significant Other, foreign policy culture, political behavior.

> "The Russian people did not grow and develop in an airless space, but in a certain environment and in a certain place."
>
> George Vernadsky. *A History of Russia*

Of all foreign-speaking communities with which Russia interacted during the formation of its statehood around Moscow, relations with the Horde were probably no less important for its foreign policy behavior and internal organization than the mutual influence of the Western European states when they were emerging within their modern borders. However, the results of these historical experiences are fundamentally different. The struggle of the European peoples with each other led to the emergence of different states within a common political civilization, while relations between Russia and the Horde led to the complete or partial integration of the latter's Eurasian nomads into the Russian state.

Even after the "contraction" of Russia at the end of the 20th century, it is the "Horde heritage," including such important areas as Siberia, the North Caucasus, and the Volga region, that makes up a significant part of the country's national territory. The Volga region was the first multi-ethnic region within Russia, where governing methods for a multinational community, the Russian elite, and national culture, characteristic of the country's subsequent development, took shape[1] (Kotlyarov D.A., 2017). A significant event by the standards of the Late Middle Ages took place on the ruins of the Horde: the struggle, with a significant ideological element on the Russian side, within several decades gave way to the peaceful joint development of the Great Russians, Tatars, and other peoples within the same state. From

[1] Importantly, this happened in the preimperial period of Russia's development. For more on the significance of the integration of the Volga region for the development of the Russian state, see: Kotlyarov, 2017, p. 478.

our point of view, this is the most significant historical event and experience in the formation of Russia as we know it today.

The most convincing proof of the unique meaning of the Horde for Russian political history is the historiography of the question, the most extensive and thorough: since Vasily Tatishchev (1984, p. 784), Nikolai Karamzin (1997, p. 831), and Nikolai Kostomarov (2007, p. 736), through fundamental studies by Sergey Solovyov and Alexander Presnyakov (1918, p. 468), conceptually integral works of the Soviet period (Grekov and Yakubovsky, 1950, p. 5-12; Nasonov, 1940, p. 178; Kargalov, 1967, pp. 218-255; Yakubovsky, 1953; Cherepnin, 1960), and up to present-day discussions (Alekseev, 1989, p. 219; Krivosheev, 2000, p. 215; ; Bazilevich, 2001, p. 544; Gorsky, 2000, p. 214). This topic has practically never been spared the influence of political preferences, remaining one of the most controversial historical issues. How relations with the Horde influenced the development of the Russian state remains the subject of fierce debates, not only academic, but also sociopolitical, addressing the present and the future of Russia (Foroyanov, 2021, p. 1088; Gorsky, 2000, p. 214).

This is partly due to the fact that our historical science has been focused on the "European affiliation" of Russia. This feature was equally a product of state interest and tradition, borrowed in the first half of the 18th century from European science and journalism. So the views of Russian and foreign historians on relations between Russia and the Horde were significant not per se, but in relation to the points of view on Russia's "Europeanness" they corroborated (Krivosheev, 2000, pp. 163-227).[2] This also determined the choice between a "negative" and a "neutral-positive" assessment of the Horde's role.

In general, the historiography of the "Mongol question" revolves around its two most fundamental aspects. Firstly, it is the very nature of relations between Russia and the Horde, several traditionally conflicting interpretations of the notion of 'yoke', and an ongoing debate on whether there was any yoke at all. Secondly, it is the form of these relations and the degree of their influence on the development of

[2] This tradition owes much to Karamzin's uncritical assessment of the European interpretation of the "Horde stage" in Russian history, as indicated, for example, by Krivosheev (2000).

Russian statehood and society, which also engender often diametrically opposite views. Assessments proposed by representatives of different historiographic traditions are of great importance because the Horde period was fundamental for Russian statehood.

With the exception of the second half of the 13th century, the Horde period is a time when the Russian state emerged and developed, with Moscow as its center, replacing the Old Russian forms of social organization. This makes the historical era of 1237 (1243)-(1451, 1472) 1480 fundamentally important for economic, political and spiritual life, administrative culture, and military organization in Russia. Therefore, it is relations with the Horde that can be recognized as the most significant foreign policy interactions during the first 200 years of the existence of the state as we continue to enjoy its continuous sovereignty.

This is why exploring a less studied aspect of the phenomenon at issue, that is, the influence of relations with the Horde on Russian foreign policy culture, is of such interest to us. We adhere to the point of view that for all the multifaceted and uneven interaction between Russia and the Horde, the dominant form of relations was the struggle of the Russian people for independence. It took different forms, but its core remained invariable—the opposition of Russian society to the "ruthless tyranny of the foreign and alien" Horde (Presnyakov, 1918, p. 50). This interdisciplinary research, conducted at the intersection of history and international relations, is intended to determine what specific characteristics of the Russian people's struggle against the Golden Horde can be considered most important for the foreign policy culture of the Russian state by the time it appeared as one of the largest European powers in the late 15th and the early 16th centuries.

HORDE AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY HISTORY

At the stage of its formation, the Russian state fought on three fronts—against the Germans, Lithuania, and the Horde—but only interaction with the Tatars had existential significance. It influenced Russia, as Bertold Spuler emphasizes, "not so much politically as culturally" (2021, p.9). What makes relations with the Horde so fundamentally

important for our political culture is the fact that the Mongol-Tatar invasion is, of course, the biggest external challenge the Russian people have ever faced.

Firstly, the destruction of Kievan Rus by the Mongol invaders created the prerequisites for the final consolidation of the Great Russians and the strengthening of the monarchical power of the princes. The most important of them was the abolition of the system of ancestral relationships between the Russian princes, which was an important consequence of the Horde invasion. The source of the increasing power of the princes in general and the prince of Moscow in particular was not so much the Horde yarlyk as the force that was the key to obtaining it.

Secondly, until the end of the 14th century, the Horde posed the greatest threat to the physical existence of the Russian people, and also constantly affected power relations between the Russian lands, often at the initiative of the princes themselves (Krivosheev, Sokolov and Guseva, 2021, p. 432).

Thirdly, it was the Horde invasion that led to the division of the state into North-Eastern and South-Western Russia, with the latter subsequently falling under the rule of Lithuania and Poland, which now constitutes a major foreign policy problem for Russia (Solovyov, 1988, p. 147).

Fourthly, it was under the influence of this most obvious threat that the Russian state, with Moscow as its center, initially acquired a particularly "military character," the main function of which was to provide protection against external enemies (Platonov, 1917, pp. 124-149; Presnyakov, 1918, p. 22; Klyuchevsky, 1937, p. 47). The long struggle against an existential external challenge required intensive social and economic interaction, but there were no sufficient geo-economic foundations for that. The presence of such a serious adversary and, most importantly, the need to constantly interact with it saved Russia from being absorbed by more socially active European neighbors. However, this did not "hide" it from the West (combat never stopped on this front) but hardened the people in their constant struggle against a superior enemy.

Finally, the victory over the Horde in 1472-1480, like no other event in Russian history, marked the beginning of Russia's unprecedented territorial expansion and the growth of its foreign policy power. After the Great Horde's fall in 1502, the Russian state began to move "towards the sun." It was the largest territorial expansion of any one state in history, when an enormous space from the Volga to the Pacific (1502-1638) was absorbed in less than 150 years.

I believe that this most important process in Russian history is connected with the significant influence of the Golden Horde factor on Russian foreign policy. Unique is not only Russia's historical experience, but particularly its result: ***Russia acquired the experience of incorporating a neighbor who for several centuries had played the role of a key antagonist ("the consolidating Other") in the development of its sovereign statehood.*** Today Russia is the only great power in the world with such experience. The ordinariness with which some elements of the Horde were integrated into Russia, starting with the deployment of Prince Qasim's "faithful Tatars" at the outlying frontiers of the Grand Duchy of Moscow in 1451-1452, only serves to emphasize its uniqueness. At the same time, the nature and content of the ties between the Russians and the Tatars after the fall of the Horde differed from the practices that arose and developed west of the Russian borders (Kotlyarov, 2017, pp. 112-136).

The end of the Mongol-Tatar hegemony under Ivan III became a watershed in the history of the Russian state between "the will to live and the will to rule." However, the period when military-political confrontation was the main (although not the only) way to interact with the Horde was not meant to draw a civilizational border. Instead, ties with the previous adversaries acquired a new quality, with Russia being the master and unifier. The reasons for this make up a separate huge part of Russian history, which has not yet been fully explored. One can look for them in the "bright and versatile" relations in the previous historical period described by historians, in the actual integration of the two societies from the middle of the 14th century, or in the already existing prerequisites noted by Lev Gumilev in his works (1984, p. 764).

More importantly, in historical and spatial terms, the Horde's Volga region was included in the Russian state simultaneously with the final incorporation of Novgorod, Pskov, and Tver, the struggle with the Lithuanians for Smolensk and its lands, and, finally, attempts to gain a foothold on the Baltic Sea under Ivan III and during the Livonian War. Russia's expansion into the territory of the former Horde was part of the process of building a large state, which at the end of the 15th century entered European and world political history "being aware of its independence and its special interests" (Presnyakov, 1918, p. 2).

The uniqueness of this experience becomes even more obvious if it is compared with that of other major powers. Of all European states, only Spain experienced an almost complete conquest by foreign-speaking and religiously alien invaders—Arabs—in 711–718. The Reconquest and its completion in 1492 were accompanied by the expulsion or forced Christianization of the Muslims and Jews, which laid the foundation in the peninsula for a modern nation-state, separated from its neighbors in the south by a geopolitical barrier in the form of a strait connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Other European states, in principle, have never eliminated their historical adversaries completely. In order to understand the scale and significance of relations between Russia and the Horde, one can imagine a hypothetical situation in which the Hundred Years' War between England and France ends with the absorption of one of the warring sides by the other, or the Balkan Slavs completely subjugate their Ottoman oppressors. However, no matter how little territory the Slavs and Greeks recaptured from Turkey, they resorted to ethnic cleansing and mass mutual expulsion, as was the case with the Greeks of Asia Minor and Muslims in the Balkan Peninsula in the first quarter of the 20th century (Lieven, 1999, pp. 163-200).[3] The history of the Russian state, on the contrary, does not know examples of harsh ethnic division.

[3] "For the Ottomans, the defeat entailed such consequences as the loss of valuable territory and the first wave of the growing flow of refugees accompanying the retreat of the imperial army. The culmination of this was the mass flight and expulsion of Muslims from the European provinces of Turkey in 1912-1923, as a result, 62 percent of the Balkan Muslim population poured into other Ottoman provinces, and another 27 percent died."

But its spatial dimension implied the spread of Moscow's power within the territory occupied for several decades prior by an entity that posed the most serious external threat to Russia—the Golden (then Great) Horde. Moscow started the first decisive military clash with the West—the Livonian War—having already acquired territories and resources (including human) from the just obtained Horde heritage. ***Relations with the Horde, despite their existential nature, were not as antagonistic for the Russian state as was its interaction with the Catholic West.*** Conceptual constructs created by prominent Russian scientists Lev Gumilev (1997, p. 560) and George Vernadsky (2013, p. 476) take center stage here. They believe that the common Eurasian nature of the Great Russian state and the steppe civilization, most vividly embodied by the Horde, was the prerequisite for the mutual integration that followed the overthrow of the "yoke."

Although in the final period of relations with the Horde, Russian political and religious rhetoric was extremely harsh, the religious factor was not as divisive as in relations with the West. In this regard, the evolution of resistance to the Tatars as a struggle for the Christian faith is of particular interest. This doctrine, as is known, comes into full view at the end of vassal relations between the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the Great Horde under Ivan III. However, after the victory following the Great Stand on the Ugra River, and during Russia's advance to the East, we see no vivid examples of repression on religious grounds or attempts to start a crusade against the Besermans. Some excesses that occurred after the conquest of Kazan in 1552 soon faded away due to the state need to integrate the Tatars regardless of their religious affiliation (pp. 566–582).[4]

[4] "Again, these precepts are fortified by the lessons of Russian history: of centuries of obscure battles between nomadic forces over the stretches of a vast unfortified plain. Here caution, circumspection, flexibility and deception are the valuable qualities; and their value finds natural appreciation in the Russian or the Oriental mind. Thus, the Kremlin has no compunction about retreating in the face of superior force. And being under the compulsion of no timetable, it does not get panicky under the necessity for such retreat. Its political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, towards a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power. But if it finds unassailable barriers in its path, it accepts these philosophically and accommodates itself to them. The main thing is that there should always be pressure, unceasing constant pressure, towards the desired goal" (X (Kennan), 1947, pp. 574-575).

This did not prevent Moscow from furthering the idea of the God-chosen Russian people and God-ordained power when formulating the principles of relations with its neighbors in the West. This concept became central to the foreign policy doctrine of the Tsardom of Russia, especially after the fall of Byzantium, and largely still is. So, cultural and religious differences with the Horde's neighbors were important for building the ideological basis of Russian foreign policy, but they did not lead to alienation between peoples, as it happened with the West.

WHAT IS OUR HYPOTHESIS?

When the Russian state began interacting directly with major European powers or the Ottoman Empire, relations with the Horde were most important and unique in terms of their impact on Russia during its "growing up" within the Great Russian North-East. In terms of significance for Russia's foreign policy culture, this impact is comparable with its initial geopolitical position, the main political processes within the Great Russian North-East, or the cultural and religious peculiarities inherited from Byzantium.

The rest of the habits and Russian foreign policy practices just piled up on the basis built as part of relations with the Horde, and played a purely corrective role for its nature. Peter the Great's sovereign policy in the Russian Empire came as a response to external challenges and new power capabilities, but it emerged on the foundation laid during the initial formation of the Russian state with its center in Moscow. And we cannot say that the imperial tradition of Russian foreign policy, which is a continuation of its Moscow forerunner, is just as fundamental. In other words, relations with the Horde are not about the mythical "Horde influence," but about being the most important element in the entire history of Russian foreign policy. This is so not because of their impact on the internal organization of Russia, which was minimal, if at all, but because they threatened the survival of the state and the development of its original international identity.

The main hypothesis is that ***relations with the Horde were most important for the foreign policy culture of Russia in a critical historical period of its formation, and they largely determined the nature and***

practical implementation of Russian foreign policy in subsequent eras. The impact of the Horde on the internal development of the Russian lands was much smaller than one might expect due to various widespread interpretations, but it is here, in foreign policy culture, that the "Horde heritage" is to be looked for in its most systematic and monumental form. It was, of course, intermediated by Russian public institutions, which otherwise developed in their own way.

Even today, the Horde era continued to shape up unique features of Russian foreign policy. Our task is to formulate several assumptions about the nature of the foreign policy of the state, whose main institutions developed in conjunction with the external environment, of which the Horde was its central element.

This is all the more important now that the international order born by the political civilization of Western Europe is coming to an end. Several centuries of European military, economic, and intellectual dominance created colossal imbalances in the distribution of power resources and wealth in the world. Material advantages were the basis for universal institutions, norms and rules of interaction between states. This system is crumbling now due to the weakening of its power base, and this process will go on for a long time. The most important thing for us is to understand individual motives and modus operandi of countries whose actions can have a significant impact on the international order in the future.

"NEITHER SUBORDINATED NOR SUBJUGATED"

There are three aspects in the cooperation with the Horde and the Steppe that interest us. First, it is the direct impact of constant forceful interaction—war and diplomacy—with a superior neighbor on Russia's ability to learn to deal with its antagonists. George Kennan describes this behavior in a romantic way as a smooth flow that, if nothing interferes with it, constantly moves towards its intended goal (X (Kennan), 1947).

Relations with such a strong opponent as the Horde formed the tradition of dedicating effort to one particular activity. Methods of doing this could vary in form, and the image of the future remained

unclear. They correlated not with the ideal image of the future, but with a sound assessment of one's own strength and at the same time with the impossibility of concessions where they could threaten the ability to independently control one's own fate. Urban population, the Church, and the princes acted as the "Russian people" (Vernadsky, 2008, p. 336). So, when Russia is destined to take a foreign policy test, priority is given to the ability, cultivated in the confrontation with the Horde, to fight on while being aware of its own comparative weakness.

The catastrophic military defeat suffered by the Russian principalities (Gorsky, 2014, pp. 7-14) at the hands of the Tatars in 1237-1241 ushered in a new era in the development of Russian statehood. It was a time when the conditions were ripening for it to become one of the strongest world powers. The severe circumstances molded the "deep Russian character" that combines the readiness to yield ground to a superior enemy and then go on the offensive as soon as the situation permits. The nature of political relations between the Russian lands and the Horde in the Mongol-Tatar period is one of the most politicized issues in history as it is closely associated with the impact of the "yoke" on the development of Russian society. This is why we inevitably have to deal with approaches that are not only historical, but historical and sociological, which explains most of the differences in the assessments made by historians.

The exception is Sergey Solovyov. For him and his followers, the Horde did not play a big role in the evolution of Russian medieval statehood (Solovyov, 1988, p. 535). However, relations with the Horde were of paramount importance for the survival of the Russian state during its initial formation around Moscow. We accept as a baseline the hypothesis that as Russia went through its transformation into Great Russia, its relations with the Hordes involved a fierce confrontation between the "two ethno-social systems" (Krivosheev, 2000, p. 105). The question of whether Russian statehood could be preserved remained open until Dmitry Donskoy's victories over the Tatars of in 1378 and 1380.

The confrontation began in a situation where the Russians were in a disadvantageous position, being unable to gather enough

forces to stand up to the Horde and its military capabilities. Batu's devastating campaigns and several punitive expeditions destroyed economic infrastructure necessary for active resistance. The Southern Russian lands suffered the most, with the exception of the Galician-Volyn Principality, which became an additional reason for the final consolidation of the North-East as the center of Great Russian statehood (Platonov, 1917, p.125). Despite the depredation of 1237-1238, there were still resources for resuming the struggle for the survival of the Russian people—a sufficient population and princely power. In addition, the combined losses of the Russian princes during the active phase of the invasion were not as significant as could be expected, and shortly after the Tatars left, the Russian princes took up their stations.

Further, this may be considered one of the reasons for the Tatars' failure to establish direct control in Russia. This would have required a new series of military campaigns, but the huge state could not afford them anymore. The unique position of Northeast Russia among the invaded peoples was determined, among other things, by the preservation of its elites and decisive resistance to even minor attempts to replace them. The adoption by Uzbek Khan, in the early 14th century (1312), of Islam as the state religion of the Horde made it utterly impossible for the Russian elites to be integrated into the Horde, which was not the case with the Russian aristocracy in southeastern and partly western territories after their occupation by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by the middle of the 14th century. (However this did not prevent the reverse process in the future—the integration of Tatar aristocrats into the Russian nobility.)

For the first 150 years after the Mongol-Tatar invasion, the fate of the emerging Great Russian people and its statehood constantly hung in the balance, which could have been instantly upset by the minimally coordinated actions of its main opponents. Under these conditions, the Russian people and their princes consistently spoke from a position of moral superiority (martyrly at first), but, being aware of their insufficient strength, they constantly looked for ways to continue the struggle, equally resorting to diplomacy and violence (Klyuchevsky, 1918, p. 73; Halperin, 2007; Halperin, 2009, p. 239). They were motivated by the spontaneous

struggle for survival and liberation from external dependence but at the same time allowed negotiations with the aggressors albeit to no more extent than they showed steadfast firmness towards them. In general, the ability to simultaneously negotiate and fight was the most important element of the relationship between Russia and the Horde during the first, most difficult, fifty years after Batu's invasion.

The military victories of Alexander Nevsky's sons Dmitry (1285) and Daniel (1300) over large Tatar forces or Mikhail Tversky's victory in 1317 over the Muscovites and the Tatars alternated with trips to the Horde and negotiations with its superior force. The Moscow princes, often seen as the guides of Sarai's influence, in reality were all but the main defiers of the Tatar khans' will, including Yuri Danilovich's decision to award himself the title of grand prince regardless of the Horde yarlyks (Gorsky, 2000, p. 55.). Let us say that the degree of apparent sequacity to the Horde on the part of the Moscow and other princes, when they needed it or when the Horde posed a mortal threat, was so great that it allows historians to hypothesize about the legitimacy of the Horde rulers in the eyes of the Russian princes (Ibid, pp. 169, 181). It can be assumed that the characterization by Russian scribes of the invasion and the "yoke" as "God's punishment" could have meant recognition of the legitimacy of the Horde's authority, if it had been followed by recognition of its ethno-social system. But it was not.

Relations with the Horde all by themselves allowed certain Russian lands to become stronger, with the Grand Duchy of Moscow coming to the fore by the end of the first quarter of the 14th century. Independent actions, disloyal to the Horde (at the end of his reign), undertaken by Prince Daniel, who relied on Moscow's military might, which increased due to numerous migrants from Southern Russia, helped strengthen its position in the fight against other Russian principalities (Platonov, 1917, p. 128; Gorsky, 2000, pp. 30, 40). The pivotal years of power consolidation in Moscow fell on the Horde's "golden period"— during the reign of Uzbek Khan and Janibek Khan (1311–1357), when Grand Princes Simeon the Proud and Ivan the Red seemed to have shown the greatest diplomatic tact with regard to Sarai's interests (Gorsky, 2000, pp. 68-79).

To summarize historians' conclusions, the struggle of the Russian people immediately after the Tatar invasion unfolded in two temporal phases: defensive (1242–1374/1380) and offensive (1380–1480). A significant role has always been given to the socio-class nature of the confrontation with the Horde, which received substantial attention in Soviet and partly Russian historiography. Each of the significant groups of Russian society—city dwellers, the Church, and the princes—participated in forceful interaction with the Tatars however they could. At first, the main violent resistance to the Horde came from the cities, but the princes started a sophisticated diplomatic game with the Tatars, while at the same time often inspiring urban movements. Regular trips by the Russian princes to the Horde built a delicate system of relations and allowed them to achieve foreign policy results. The first such trip was made in 1242 by Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich of Vladimir and his son Konstantin. Subsequently, such trips and prolonged stay in the Horde became an important element of relations aimed at preserving independent Russian statehood.

With limited strength, the Russian princes effectively fought against attempts by western opponents—Lithuania and the Livonian Order—to expand, almost invariably winning military victories over them. The Tatars took part in these battles as allies of the Russians, but did not play a decisive role, and so the ability to independently fight against threats from the west became an important factor in gaining the independence of the Northeastern lands, and soon Moscow, from the Horde. Also, Russian princes sometimes suffered martyrdom in the Horde, becoming victims of the Tatars' internal intrigues and arbitrariness, which was interpreted by the scribes as the death knell for the world, as an abnormal event. History has recorded eight or ten such cases, but this was not catastrophic, given the number of Russian princes (Seleznev, 2019, p. 272).

In multifaceted military-diplomatic interaction, the Russian rulers "were completely free from Tatar influence on their internal orders" already in the first decades of relations with the Horde (Solovyov, 1988, p. 477). Therefore, the Tatar "yoke" practically did not affect the internal organization of the Russian lands, which did not become part of the Ulus Juchi to the extent other territories invaded by the Mongols—Iran,

China or Central Asia—did. Granting Horde yarlyks to the Russian princes was a diplomatic act of their submission but guaranteed that the Tatars would not interference in the governance of Russian territories. In other words, the Russian princes maintained sovereignty, including the key right to issue their owns laws, throughout the "yoke."

Russian urban communities, for their part, created conditions that made the sovereignty of princely power a rational choice for the Tatars (Krivosheev, 2000, pp. 163-227). The first uprisings (in Novgorod, Suzdal, Rostov, and other cities) were a response to the census of 1257-1259, and the introduction of the baskak system by Berke Khan. All by itself, the baskak system did not mean military-political control over the Russian lands, but subsequently uprisings in the cities occurred regularly not only against the baskaks, but also against the Horde's envoys. According to historians, it was the popular armed resistance that forced the Tatars to scrap the system of buy-offs, practiced by Central Asian merchants, in the Russian North-East by the mid-1260s.

The struggle against the Horde's attempts to monitor the collection of tribute more closely continued until the end of the first third of the 14th century, when the functions finally passed to the Moscow grand princes (Maslova, 2013, pp. 27-40). From the very beginning, any attempts to create in Russia a system resembling direct control faced with armed resistance, for which reason punitive campaigns were the only instrument of control by the Horde. They were undertaken repeatedly but were not always successful. The Church (and religious literature) insisted that the "yoke" was "God's punishment" and Christians had to accept it with humility, as historians correctly noticed (Rudakov, 2017, p. 175), but this did not mean the recognition of the Horde khans' power. Even less so did the interpretations of church scribes, who invariably defined the Horde's power as "filthy" and as "Babylonian captivity," which suggested an undoubtedly temporary nature of the Tatars' power dominance over the Russians (Seleznev, 2019, p. 12). So, recognizing the Horde's strength is not necessarily identical to recognizing its power. ***Strength and legitimacy are two notions that are not connected with each other in Russian foreign policy culture.***

The Horde's strategy of playing on the contradictions between the Russian princes and inciting conflicts deserves special attention. Tatar khans always encouraged strife between Russian princes and created external reasons for that. In conditions of general weakness against the Horde, these clashes acquired the character of power struggle in which there was no place for ancient ancestral relations (Solovyov, 1988, p. 209) The Russian princes fought with each other for resources and at the same time defended and expanded their sovereign rights in relations with the Horde. All this created the prerequisites for the concentration of resources in the hands of one of the competing principalities in the North-East, namely Moscow, whose geographical location and whose rulers' talents were most desirable in the changed conditions (Platonov, 1917, p. 147). This concentration of forces—the core process in internal relations from the end of the 13th century—was quite linear in nature and made it possible, in 1374, to formally unite the forces of the Russian lands for the specific purpose of fighting a war against the Horde.

Discord between princes and urban communities was nothing new in Russian history. In fact, it existed throughout the entire period from the middle of the 11th century to the first half of the 13th century, including such dramatic events as the ruin of Kiev by the northern princes in 1167. In other words, the Tatar khans' intrigues did not give anything new to the Russians. But it is largely because of these conflicts that the Old Russian state became a relatively easy prey for Batu. However, in the new conditions, the discord that the Tatars sought to sustain did not lead to mutual weakening. On the contrary, resources were increasingly concentrated in the hands of the most tenacious Moscow princedom already in the second quarter of the 14th century. This allowed it to explicitly challenge the Horde in 1380, and then become its gravedigger.

As a result of the resistance put up by citizens and princes, nothing resembling symbiosis or stable hierarchical relations with the Horde took place even in the most difficult period of Russian history from the middle of the 13th century to the second quarter of the 14th century. On the contrary, multilateral and multilevel interaction, where the

struggle remained the central element, led to the creation, according to Grekov and Yakubovsky, of the Russian state "against the will of the Tatar khan and his power" (Grekov and Yakubovsky, 1950, p. 505). The transfer by Grand Prince Dmitry Ivanovich of Moscow of the right to princedom to his son Vasily, although he was subsequently elevated to the throne in Vladimir by the khan's ambassador, marked the culmination of this process. Thus Great Russia was able to get rid of the most formal sign of dependence on the Horde through struggle.

And again, just like during the "yoke" period, it was a military event that had paramount importance—the victory of the united Russian forces commanded by Grand Prince Dmitry Donskoy of Moscow over emir Mamai's army on the Kulikovo field. But the right that Dmitry had transferred to his son was no longer limited to the Grand Duchy of Moscow but covered the entire emerging state. It is no coincidence that the special role of this central military event in the emergence of the Great Russian state was emphasized by Lev Gumilev, who writes: "The men of Suzdal, Vladimir, Rostov, and Pskov went to fight on the Kulikovo field as representatives of their principalities, but came back as Russians, albeit living in different cities. This is why, the Battle of Kulikovo is regarded in the ethnic history of our country as the event after which a new ethnic community—Muscovy—became a reality, a fact of world historical significance" (Gumilev, 1997, p. 560).

The Battle of Kulikovo marked the second stage of relations with the Horde, when the emerging Russian state no longer put up resistance, but went on the offensive. One of the first examples of such a change in behavior was Yuri of Zvenigorod's march to the Middle Volga region (1395/1399). Grand Prince Ivan III's victory on the Ugra River brought intermediate results. In 1380, the social-class basis of confrontation changed fundamentally. Now, acting on the part of Great Russia was no longer an abstract coalition of citizens, princes, and the Church, but a single state increasingly consolidated around Moscow (Platonov, 1917, pp.134-135). The process of gathering the Great Russian lands was finally completed only with the incorporation of Novgorod, Pskov, Tver, and Ryazan in the late 15th-early 16th centuries. But by the time Grand Prince Vasily I was enthroned, Moscow had accumulated

enough strength to start a war that did not stop until the conquest of Crimea under Catherine the Great.

The Church, for its part, was turning more and more into a source of ideological support for the active struggle against the Horde. The spirit and substance of the concepts underlying the attitude towards the Tatars had changed dramatically: the acknowledged inevitability and deservingness of "God's punishment" gave away to signals denouncing the "lawlessness" of the Horde regime and its specific rulers (Rudakov, 2017, p. 176). This provided fertile ground for a new ideology of the state in Russian literature, which we will discuss below.

The actual offensive began even before the Battle of Kulikovo. For example, in 1376, troops led by Russian princes marched to Bulgar in order to seize lands from the Horde. This, however, was not a war as it was usually interpreted in Western European and later in Russian history. Until 1472, the Grand Duchy of Moscow paid tribute to the Horde and at the same time fought against it, rebuffing attempted punitive or plunderous campaigns, or attacking the Tatars' vassal territories. Russian princes stopped traveling to the Horde, more and more Tatars joined Russian service, and the cities turned from independent participants in the fight against the Tatars into economic and demographic resources in the hands of the grand princes of Moscow and their integral policy, which included war and diplomacy.

The only thing that prevented Great Russia from cranking up pressure on the Horde was its own domestic political factors. The most important among them was civil strife in the second quarter of the 15th century. The feud between Grand Prince Vasily II of Moscow and his uncle and cousins is one of the most colorful and fascinating episodes of Russian history (Krivosheev, Sokolov and Guseva, 2021, pp. 319-332) For us, however, another thing is important, namely the integration of the Tatars as subjects of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, a process that was taking place within the framework of the internal conflict.

This historical phenomenon has been thoroughly explored in Russian literature, including in terms of the "restoration of civil peace" after the war, in which service class Tatars had actively fought (Kotlyarov, 2017, p. 478). According to George Vernadsky's original assessment, the creation

of the Kasimov Kingdom marked the actual end of the Mongol-Tatar hegemony in relations with Great Russia and became an internal political act of tremendous foreign policy significance (Vernadsky, 2013, p. 355). Tatar morzalar had often taken service with the Moscow princes even before the middle of the 15th century. So the process of integrating Tatars into the Russian state began long before it went on the decisive offensive against the Horde-controlled territories.

The end of the purely formal dependence under Ivan III did not stop the pressure exerted by increasingly strong Great Russia on the Horde and subsequently on the Steppe. On the contrary, it became more persistent and systemic at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. As a result, Russia incorporated not just some fragments of the Horde, but its huge territories. The consistent efforts taken by generations of Russian citizens, religious figures, and princes over the previous 250 years did not come to an end, but smoothly evolved into a new process of expanding the Russian state. The history of Moscow's relations with the Khanate of Kazan, which separated from the Golden Horde in 1438, is quite indicative. Numerous wars, during which Kazan attacked at first and then had to defend itself, led to the establishment of the Moscow protectorate over it and its final incorporation into Russia under Ivan the Terrible. So the defensive and offensive phases of relations with a strong fragment of the Horde were inseparable and, above all, integrated into the two most important periods of Russian history—the Grand Duchy of Moscow, including the Russian state, and the Tsardom of Russia (after 1547) (Pelenski, 1967, pp. 559-576).

INTEGRATION OF THE "SIGNIFICANT OTHER"

For 250 years after Batu's invasion of Russia, the Mongol-Tatar neighborhood occupied a central place in the picture of the outside world around emerging Great Russia. The Russian social community, which started interaction with the Horde during the decline of the early medieval orders, came out of it as a relatively unified nation and state. The struggle against the Horde, truly nationwide as we have seen, for a long period of time filled the existence of Russian statehood with international political meaning. At the same time, the resistance to the "yoke" was

accompanied by constant attempts to "understand what is happening and what spiritual situation Russia is in" (Rudakov, 2017, p. 11).

Within the framework of this process, crucial for national identity, the Horde posed the most significant external challenge, interaction with which served as a yardstick for evaluating the morality and statehood of the Russian people. The Mongol-Tatar ethno-social system acted as the Other for the emerging Russian state, whose unique culture and identity formed by comparison with it (Budovnits, 1960; Galperin, 2012; Keenan, 1986, pp. 115-181). The scribes' assessments of the nature of the challenge in the 13th-15th centuries evolved from the acceptance of the invasion as punishment for sins to the declaration of the just and godly armed struggle with the Horde and victory over it.

From the very beginning, the Eurasian nomads went together with Old Russia—Khazars, Pechenegs, Polovtsy, black klobuks, smaller steppe tribes, and the terrifying Obri (ancient name for Avars used in chronicles) who had been intimidating it for centuries (Kargalov, 1967, p. 411). But none of the constantly changing neighbors threatened the existence of Russia and its people. Relations with each of them quickly went from war to the diplomacy of equals or even allied relations. Given this historical experience, Batu's invasion turned out to be a fundamentally new phenomenon. Having come from the depths of Eurasia, "the most terrible, the most numerous" enemy that had "made as many conquests as no one had ever made before" shocked the Russian people by its fury (Gogol, 2018, p. 37). So it became an external factor, powerful enough to spur the formation of Great Russian statehood as part of the community of surrounding peoples.

The reference to the Mongol-Tatars in Russian chronicles allows us to see a broad picture of how this Other was perceived in space and time from the middle of the 13th century to last quarter of the 15th century (Rudakov, 2017, p. 320; Galperin, 2012, p. 230). The general characteristics of perception can be divided into an assessment of the role of the invasion and the subsequent "yoke" in the fate of the Russian people, on the one hand, and the nature of the Horde state in its comparison with the Russian ideal, on the other. In the former case, we can see certain evolution from the acceptance of the Horde threat as

fair punishment for the sins of the past and the present to statements indicating its oppressive nature and the need to fight for liberation. As for the nature of the Horde state, it was never seen as worthy of reconciliation, recognition, let alone adoption of its elements in Russian practices (Galperin, 2012 p.230). At the final stage of the Russian people's struggle for independence, sources explicitly describe the khan as a "self-styled king" and justify the struggle against the Horde, as in a message from Bishop Vassian the Snout (Rudakov, 2017, p. 172).[5] But even when events and their assessment by chronicles give historians reason to think about forced reconciliation with the "yoke," there is still no equivalence between the Russian and the Horde states.

Against this background, the uniqueness of the phenomenon that followed the demise of the Horde in 1502 becomes even more obvious. As we have noted above, the incorporation of the Volga region and then Siberia into Russia was a continuous process in relation to the Russian people's struggle for their independence. There was a smooth transition from one period of Russian foreign policy history into another, with the Horde and its heritage serving as a binding element. The bulk of the former Horde lands were incorporated into the Russian state during the first hundred years after the Great Stand on the Ugra River, and only Crimea remained in an uncertain position for almost two more centuries. The unification of lands around Moscow, the creation of the Russian state and its transformation into a multinational state were intertwined with each other within the framework of a single set of events and phenomena in the history of this part of Eurasia.

As a result, Russia acquired the experience, unique for modern powers, of gradual and ultimately complete absorption of the strongest and dangerous neighbor and its full integration into its own state system. But this integration was not even. The first decisive step was the resettlement of the Tatars along the southeastern borders of the Grand Duchy of Moscow under Vasily II, followed by the incorporation of the Kazan and Astrakhan khanates, the conquest of Siberia and the Nogai Horde, and the subsequent advancement into the Kazakh Steppe and

[5] "Not merely shall free and deliver ... us from this new pharaoh but shall enslave them to us too" (*Message on the Ugra* by Vassian the Snout).

Central Asian oases in the 18th-19th centuries. Southern Kazakhstan and Central Asia were not part of the Horde's heritage, although at some point they were part of the Mongol Empire. Actually, the Horde lands—the Volga region, the territory between the Volga and the Don, as well as Siberia—were securely integrated into the Russian state even before the Time of Troubles.

There are two circumstances that particularly catch historians' attention: the scale of territorial expansion within a relatively short time, and the thoroughness with which new peoples were incorporated into the main Great Russian lands, including through the integration of the Tatar aristocracy into the Russian nobility. Both phenomena provided the basis for hypotheses about the natural reasons behind them, that is, the Eurasian character of the Russian and steppe (Horde) civilizations or the "Russian-Tatar symbiosis" after Batu's campaigns and its confrontation with the West. In the former case, we deal with the ideas espoused by George Vernadsky and other Eurasians, who did not deny the terrorist nature of the "yoke," but viewed the incorporation of what remained of the Horde as the natural development by Russians of huge Eurasian territories. The second concept, authored by historian and writer Lev Gumilev, essentially questions the existence of the "yoke" in the traditional interpretation accepted in Russian and Soviet science (Gumilev, 2004, p. 564).

Gumilev's concept, both convincing and controversial, focuses on the nature of Russian-Horde relations and its historical foundations, which dates back to the pre-Mongol period of Old Russia. It offers a new look at history to explain why the emergence of the Russian state as a sustainable multinational phenomenon of a pan-Eurasian scale became possible after the fall of the Horde. This once again proves that the development of relations between recent adversaries after the end of the Horde's hegemony was quite unique. For Gumilev, the original "symbiosis" between the Russians and the Tatars serves as the most convincing substantiation of their subsequent peaceful coexistence and the natural spread of Russia to the vast expanses of Siberia.

Other European states had not had such historical experience—their Reconquista and expansion were accompanied by repressive policies

against former opponents. There can also be simpler explanations. The main ones would, of course, include smooth transformation of the struggle with the Horde into the integration of its "heritage," the Tatar aristocracy joining Russian service en masse and resettling in border lands already in the first half of the 15th century, as well as a pragmatic choice of the grand Moscow princes and Russian monarchs faced with a chronic lack of human resources necessary for westward territorial expansion. The latter was proclaimed the main goal of the Russian state shortly after the Great Stand on the Ugra River, as Ivan III notified Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in 1490 (Tomsinov, 2003, p. 64). In addition, the territorial question was not so acute for the Russian state—there was no need to drive other people out of their territories in order to resettle Great Russians outside their historical lands. In fact, there was enough land for everyone.

However, we are more interested not even in the integration of different ethno-social systems after the end of the struggle between them and the origin of this phenomenon, but in its influence on Russian foreign policy culture. No state in Europe, and the world as a whole, has experienced events and processes of such magnitude. ***A powerful neighbor, who posed the biggest threat to the Great Russians for more than two hundred years, fell under the pressure of his own internal weakness, was defeated on the battlefield and eventually fully incorporated into Russia, with the bulk of his aristocracy joining the Russian nobility.*** We find similar examples only in the ancient history of states in Western Asia or Antiquity, but never in European or Asian history of the last one and a half thousand years. Such a unique event inevitably affected the way Russia sees itself in the world around it and what it expects from others.

Could the integration of the most powerful and dangerous adversary provide such a strong historical experience that it will determine the attitude to one's own ability to solve foreign policy problems, regardless of their scale, complexity and time that may be needed for achieving the goal? This historical experience is probably the reason for the well-known "viscosity" of Russian foreign policy in its various manifestations. A monotonous movement towards a particular

goal does not necessarily imply the ability to identify priorities—this is not only a challenge to the foreign policy practice, but also a basic characteristic of our behavior, which nothing can change.

Even if political actors at a given historical moment think that a particular task seems impracticable due to the lack of power and resources, the acknowledgement of this fact does not necessarily become an underlying principle of a foreign policy strategy. Russia generally does not recognize current reality as unquestionable because experience shows that nothing is impossible in the long run. This habit makes calls to give up foreign policy aspirations due to a rational analysis of the current balance of power unrealizable in practice, especially when national foreign policy philosophy is based on a radical interpretation of the idea of divine protection.

CHOSEN WINNERS

The third important aspect of the influence of relations with the Horde on Russian foreign policy culture is associated with the formation and development of the concept of the Russian state, and its political and philosophical foundation, which acquired its final form in the second half of the 15th and the first quarter of the 16th centuries. The consolidation of power in the hands of the grand Moscow princes was completed as a result of an internecine war in the second quarter of the 15th century, when the system of different lands finally formed a single state. At the same time, two pivotal events occurred in the history of Orthodoxy: the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–1445 and the fall of Constantinople under the "Hagarians' poleaxes and hatches" in 1453. Internal and external circumstances created a historical moment for the transition of Russian statehood into a new state where its ideology had to be completely revamped (Malinin, 1901, p. 1032).

It carries on the existing tradition, but acquires a more solid philosophical foundation within the Muscovite state. The main Christian philosophical works are translated into Russian, and chronicle writing enjoys its glory days. As Byzantium declines, mass cultural exchanges fill intellectual life in Great Russia, and the strengthening of princely power makes it desired. At an early stage

of Russian absolutism, it is characterized by a wide variety of points of view and philosophical approaches to the development of political and legal theory. The cultural heritage of Kievan Rus, which received new interpretations during the struggle for survival, is appreciated and developed. This process is also facilitated by such a feature of political and legal consciousness, noted by Tomsinov, as the need for the state's actions and ideology to take root in the past (Tomsinov, 2003, p. 65).

The central place in the new ideology is given to the succession of power among Moscow princes since Vladimir Monomakh, who, according to the interpretation made at the beginning of the 16th century, received the royal crown from the Byzantine emperor. This draws a fundamental distinction between the power of a true, God-blessed tsar (successor to the Byzantine emperors) and a self-styled and fake one, with Akhmat Khan of the Horde described in Russian political philosophy works as the first among the latter (Kudryavtsev, n.d, p. 138-157). The message from Bishop Vassian in 1480 was intended to convince the grand prince of the need to fight a war against the Horde, whose rulers had been allegedly promised by Russian princes not to oppose them. This should not be absolutized, of course, since there were open conflicts with the khans and even military alliances against them. On top of it all, in support of his arguments, Vassian proclaims all Horde rulers, starting from Batu, as self-styled.

During the Great Stand on the Ugra River, the notion of just war against a false tsar assumes its final character—the struggle with the Horde becomes not only a war for faith, but also a battle between the true and the false. The tsar opposing the Horde is a God-loving defender of the Christian faith, not just a secular ruler. On this basis, the outlines of an ideal Orthodox Christian state become visible for Russia as early as the first quarter of the 16th century. The idea of divine protection, clearly formulated as a foreign policy doctrine by the metropolitan at the time of the decisive clash with the Horde and systematized in "The Tale of the Great Stand on the Ugra River," determined the purpose and content of Russia's policy after liberation from dangerous neighbors and conquerors in the East. The Russian

state's relations with its opponents become a struggle for faith, which it wages relying on the solid basis of the "New Israel's" exclusivity (Yefimov, 1912, p.50). Russia's foreign policy was permeated by this concept when Moscow began interacting with the West long before thinkers addressed the question of distinct Russian civilization (Rowland, 1996, pp. 591-614).

* * *

It was the interaction with the Horde during the formation of Russian statehood around Moscow that molded several basic features of national foreign policy culture. The most important of them are the ability to fight while being aware of its own comparative weakness; readiness to easily combine diplomatic and military actions without drawing a clear line between them; refusal to recognize any foreign policy goals as knowingly unattainable due to an analysis of the current balance of power; unawareness of and non-use in foreign policy practice of such categories as 'civilizational border,' which was the result of full integration of the "consolidating Other"; and a deeply-rooted concept of exclusivity, which, however, does not have a messianic character in its Western sense.

All these habits emerged over a long historical period, during which Old Russian statehood was replaced by a single, and then centralized, state with institutions that have survived up to date in one form or another. It is not so important for us how much Russia's formal institutions are similar to the European, Asian, or ideal Eurasian models. What is more important is which of the established ideas, perceptions, traditions, and habits define the daily activities of their representatives—the Russian people. It is the Russian people, as Georgy Vernadsky rightly pointed out, that is the "creator of Russian history," and we are living through one of its most decisive moments now.

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