



Vernadsky

Opening Remarks of the Editor-in-Chief

People are often compared to a candle, sun, star, river, ocean, etc. They do so out of a desire to find an appropriate starting point in trying to measure the scale of the individual. But there are individuals who are themselves perfect. Vladimir I. Vernadsky is among those few.

Sometimes the development of science and human thought in general is imagined as a stream or as a leapfrog game, where the followers stand on the shoulders of predecessors, involuntarily writing them off to the archive. Such idea is not always true. A more accurate description seems the description in terms of mountains and landscapes. Tops, peaks — that is what essential, what sets the tone both to space, and time, and imagination, and memory.

Vernadsky is the top, the requirement of its cognition is constant in the requirements for a real scientific search, real education, real culture, and real civic consciousness. About such peaks it was once said from the stand by philosopher: «He should be read standing...».

Vernadsky, as the mouth of the powerful river and the beginning of the great sea, embraces many strands, ways of human thought. This continuity and organic scientific inheritance in Vernadsky is framed by teachers, students and colleagues of V.I. Vernadsky who had also their predecessors, successors, and colleagues. Thus, in St. Petersburg University the teacher of the future Academician was V. Dokuchaev whose own research genealogy goes back to A. Butlerov, I. Mechnikov, D. Mendeleev. When Vernadsky was 20, V. Dokuchaev in the doctoral dissertation defended the foundations of the landscapes doctrine. If it existed the Nobel Prize in 1900, for the world scientific sensation about natural zoning, relationship of animated and inanimate nature, V. Dokuchaev, would no doubt have become its winner. When Vernadsky was more than 60 years, he identified the shells (geospheres) of the Earth differing by physical and chemical, thermodynamic properties, and created in the USSR Academy of Sciences the Division of Living Matter. It is easy to see the deep continuity between the efforts of Dokuchaev and Vernadsky. For solutions in the radioactive elements close to Vernadsky's approaches his international and national colleagues have received the Nobel Prize. And Vernadsky saw the award in its own name when alive.

Vernadsky's research school alumni — outstanding geologists and physicists, science managers and innovative breakthroughs, and governmental officials. Especially it is necessary to recall his son George, one of the founders of the American school of Russian historiography. George's grandfather in 1858, several years before the birth

of V. Vernadsky, published the first in Russia, «Essay on the History of Political Economy,» and one of the first in Russia researches on geopolitics. And even earlier ancestor was among the Cossacks the circle of Bohdan Khmelnytsky. Thus, by horizontal and vertical of genetic and intellectual relationships it was formed phenomenon of the great scientist. The 150th anniversary from the day and many generations before his birth absorbed the unusually capacious and richly equipped history of human thought with the history of human thought, research and public service, and selfless devotion.

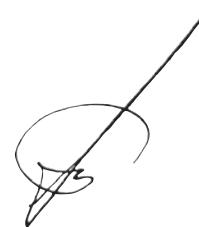
From his ancestors and from his father, Actual State Councilor, which was a very high status in the «table of ranks» of the Russian Empire, V.I. Vernadsky inherited a bright life position: he is a member of the zemstvo movement, a member of the Central Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party and the State Council, the founder of a number of institutions and high-level commissions still operating.

Vernadsky is not the only scientist whom stumbled over the tsunami of mass and selective terror and tectonic social shifts of the first half of the twentieth century. But, perhaps, he is the only one with such a track record, it would seem clear the «execution», who not only survived, but who worked, created, kept and saved — the science, other people (scientists, officers), the honor of scientist and citizen. And this very fact allows us to talk about the time of his life not so widely, as is often the case in the debate. Something very important is still hidden from us in how to live with dignity in any times, including such as «executions are going

constantly, at the local Chekas hooligans, robbers are dominated» or when «new barbarism» is spreading like an epidemic in science.

Over the decades of his diverse activities Vernadsky presented to science, many industries, including nuclear, to the states — Russian, Ukrainian, Kazakhstan, to the world his powerful ideas and the energy of his personality. Vernadsky by the power of his thought and personality became the generator of evolution of the noospheric force,

the end result of its evolution is «still hidden from us.»



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