Eurasianism has attracted increasing attention in Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union in recent years, and, given the current state of affairs, the interest is bound to grow. With attention has come considerable confusion. The self-styled Eurasians of post-Soviet times differ substantially from the founders and participants of the movement in the 1920s and the 1930s. These neoEurasians, including such notables as Aleksandr Gel'evich Dugin and the late Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev, often misinterpret and misrepresent the ideas of their predecessors. Even in scholarly treatments, both Russian and non-Russian, crucial distinctions are sometimes not drawn, contributing to common misunderstandings about the meaning of Eurasianism. The aim of the present essay is to present a clearer picture of what the original Eurasians defined as the basic terms of their worldview. In the process of pursuing this aim, I strive to emphasize the indispensable contributions of two specific founding members of Eurasianism — Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii (1895-1968) and Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoï (1890-1938).1 Finally, after establishing the basic terms and commenting on the development of the Eurasian movement, this essay examines the implications of the Eurasian vision for the present and the future.

The central concept of the movement was the idea of Eurasia. The term Eurasia — Evraziia — was taken by the Eurasians to mean not the combination of Europe and Asia, as that term is commonly understood, but rather as a separate entity. Evraziia, as defined by the founders of Eurasianism, was neither Europe nor Asia, but a different "geographical world" altogether, distinct.
from the first two. The Eurasians drew a distinction between a "part of the earth" (chasti sveta) and a "geographical world" (geograficheskii mir). The continuous landmass of Europe and Asia taken together was termed a "part of the earth"; this greater "part of the earth" was in turn divided into three distinct "geographical worlds" that interact but are essentially dissimilar — Europe, Asia, and Eurasia. Laying claim to a discovery of a new "geographical world" that includes most of the Russian empire, Eurasianism aimed to remove Russia-Eurasia from both Europe and Asia, and proclaim it a unique geographical and cultural space. Thus, contrary to a popular misunderstanding shared by many of their detractors and supporters, Eurasians did not strive to move Russia from Europe toward Asia, but rather from Europe onto the Russian empire's own "Eurasian plain." Eurasians did not strive to identify Russia with India, China, or Japan, but to weld what was previously classified as European Russian empire (called by the Eurasians Rossiia Doural'skaia — that is, Russia before the Urals) with its Asian counterpart (Rossiia Zaural'skaia — Russia beyond the Urals). To that end, the Eurasians did strongly identify ethnic Russians with the other peoples of Eurasia, notably the Finno-Ugric, Turkic and Mongolian. In contradistinction to the Slavophiles and the Pan-Slavs, Eurasians contended that the ethnic, cultural and linguistic intermixing over the centuries between the Russians and the other inhabitants of Eurasia separated the Eastern Slavs — the Russians, the Ukrainians, and the Belorussians — from other Slavs to the west and to the south, and linked them inextricably with the other ethnic groups that shared with them the

For a bibliography on Eurasianism, see Ilya Vinkovetsky, "Eurasianism in Its Time: A Bibliography," in Ilya Vinkovetsky and Charles Schlacks, Jr., eds., Exodus to the East: Forebodings and Events: An Affirmation of the Eurasians (Idyllwild, CA: Charles Schlacks, Jr., Publisher, 1996), pp. 143-74. My bibliography, with an accompanying article, is focused primarily, but not exclusively, on the classic Eurasian cannon of the 1920s and 1930s. Another recent bibliography — (O Evrazii i evrazietsakh [bibliograficheskii ukazatel']) — [Petrozavodsk: Izdatel'stvo Petrozavodskogo universiteta, 1996]) provides a more complete listing of the recent works on Eurasianism produced in Russia. Aleksandr V. Antoshchenko's article "Spory o evraziistve" on pages 7-43 reviews much of the scholarly and polemical literature on Eurasianism from the 1920s to the mid-1990s.


3. In a pamphlet he put out under a pseudonym, Nikolai S. Trubetskoi uses slightly different terminology from his colleague Savitskii, referring to Evraziia, in the Eurasian sense, as a "part of the earth" and a "continent." The main point remains the same; Evraziia is distinct from Europe and Asia. I. R. [N. S. Trubetzkoy], "The Legacy of Genghis Khan: A Perspective on Russian History Not from the West but from the East" (an English translation of Nasledie Chingizkhanna: vzgliad na russkuiu istoriiu ne s Zapada a s Vostoka [Berlin 1925]), trans. by Kenneth Brostrom, on pp. 161-231, in N. S. Trubetzkoy, The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's Identity, ed. with a postscript, by Anatoly Liberman; preface by Viacheslav V. Ivanov (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1991), p. 164.