

## INTRODUCTION

**Michał Bohun, Cezar Jędrysko**

The transition from the 1980s to the 1990s, so symptomatic and significant in the history of Europe, especially its Central and Eastern part, or whatever one calls the area extending to the right-hand side of the Iron Curtain, also marked a special moment in Polish research into the history of Russian philosophical and social thought. It was a momentous occasion in the efforts of Polish scholars – representing different disciplines – not only to portray the history of Russia and neighbouring countries using the tools of historiography of ideas, but also to understand their present, and perhaps predict the future. Suffice to recall that it was in that period that very important monographs appeared almost simultaneously. They were devoted to the philosophical aspects of the Narodniks movement (by Włodzimierz Rydzewski and Józef Pawlak), *pochvennichestvo*, with particular emphasis on Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Apollon Grigoryev (by Andrzej de Lazari), and later, an important study by Cezary Wodziński on Lev Shestov. This period also brought PhD dissertations (fortunately majority of them were later published) written by scholars who quickly became major figures in the study of the history of Russian and Polish philosophy.

All this happened mainly in the triangle of Lodz – Warsaw – Krakow, which later began to expand, extending to Lublin, Białystok, Poznan, Opole, Zielona Góra. Everything took place in an atmosphere inspired by the outstanding achievements of Professor Andrzej Walicki - although for some representatives of this "uprising" he was a critical, albeit neces-

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sary, point of reference. As a result, within a few years the phenomenon of the Polish school of investigators of Russian thought was born – a phenomenon of global significance, but never noticed or appreciated. Suffice to say that according to Andrzej Walicki, in the heart of Krakow there were more scholars working on Russian philosophy than in the entire United States. But what is relevant is not only the volume, but also the quality of these studies. It was and it remains higher than anywhere else.

The purpose of this volume, submitted for your humble consideration, is to report what has survived and what was born from this extraordinary ferment. This volume refers to, and wants to be a conscious continuation of, the work undertaken in the Krakow community of researchers of history of Russian thought centred on the Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University. In this Institute there used to be the Department of Russian Philosophy, which was very unusual in this part of the world. It was an active and fruitful research centre, evidence of which includes international conferences that took place once every two years and the series Jagiellonian Studies in Russian Philosophy that consisted in a dozen or so volumes. After the premature death – but when is it ever on time? – of Włodzimierz Rydzewski, our efforts have lost some of their regularity. However, after the release of an important volume on Post-Neo-Kantianism – Ontologism (a thematic volume of the journal *Aesthetics and Criticism* vol. 24, No. 4, 2012, ed. B. Czardybon, L. Augustyn, M. Bohun) we want to present another collection of texts, showing that it is possible to try to understand Poland, Russia and ideas important to our self-knowledge, from a philosophical point of view.

The purpose of this volume is also to remember and commemorate Włodzimierz Rydzewski, who gathered around himself a circle of students, colleagues and friends. Professor Andrzej Walicki has been the great patron of this circle. We are delighted that our environment is enriched by a new generation of researchers and scholars. This shows that the Polish tradition of serious thinking about Russia, Poland, society, history and politics, is not dying, despite the laments of journalists and the actual actions of decision-makers.

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This issue of *Culture and Values* dedicated to Russian thought begins with a text by Janusz Dobieszewski “Włodzimierz Rydzewski – Leftist

Thinking, Thinking of the Left”, in which the author analyses Rydzewski in the background of the intellectual formation with which he identified himself and compares it with that of Andrzej Walicki and Marek Siemek.

In the article “‘The Russian Idea’ as a Problem – Philosophical Horizon”, Marian Broda analyses one of Rydzewski’s key concepts - the idea of Russia. The author presents the philosophical metamorphosis of this category and its historical concretisations.

The motif of the idea of Russia, where religion and politics complement each other, is continued in text of Leszek Augustyn. The article “The Grand Inquisitor and the Russian Idea”, referring to Dostoevsky's writings, shows the figure of Grand Inquisitor in the context of political theology.

The text “Metaphysical Sources of Radicalism and Nihilism in Russia”, written by Władimir Warawa, addresses the problem of the sources of Russian nihilism and their relationship with the idea of Russia from a broader perspective.

The four remaining articles relate to more specific issues. In the first one (“Principles of independent anarchistic ethics in the doctrine of Peter Kropotkin”) Katarzyna Duda investigates the assumptions of anarchist ethics of Peter Kropotkin's and his postulate of mutual help. In the second (“Clausewitz inverted. Bolshevism, Revolution and War in Nikolay Berdyaev’s Thought”) Michał Bohun examines the considerations of Nicholas Berdyaev about the impact of the Great War on ideology, cultural patterns and way of exercising power in Russia – when politics becomes the continuation of war. In the third (“The Individual and the Community – A Study of Two Cases”), Andrzej Ostrowski compares two models of organization of social life that have been proposed by Vladimir Solovyov and Lev Shestov. Finally, in the fourth (“Europe in Crisis: Catastrophic Visions of Alexander Herzen and José Ortega y Gasset”) Natalia Michna juxtaposes the catastrophic diagnoses of Western European culture offered by Alexander Herzen and José Ortega y Gasset. She also analyses the issue of social changes that resulted in the division of society into elite and masses.

Two last articles relate to the theme of Russian religious modernism. Marek Kita, in “Russian ‘orthodox modernism’ and ecumenical orthodoxy. Fundamental theological reflection”, compares the religious concepts of Russian religious-philosophical renaissance with Catholic modernism in the context of theological-fundamental discussion on the subject of the official development of church tradition. Halina Rarot dedicated her text “The religious modernism and neo-modernism in Russia”

to the phenomenon of the restoration of religious modernism and the rise of the Neo-Modernism movement in contemporary Russia.

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