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## **Philosophizing in Russia: Dynamics in the Socio-Cultural Context**

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*This paper analyzes the main stages and vicissitudes of the evolution of different forms of Russian philosophizing throughout last two centuries in the changing socio-cultural context. The author enlists characteristics of the environment and factors forming community of intellectuals, the first philosophical “crystallized” circles in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Specificity of philosophizing is considered in terms of three different intellectual niches in Russian society of that time, namely university, spiritual and academic and so-called free (journalistic-publishing community). The main attention is devoted to the analysis of the dynamics of the latter: formation of major dispositions in the field of intellectual focus – Slavophiles and Westernizers, radicalism of 1850-60s; the years of Foundation – writings by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Solovyov; clashes of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; origin Soviet philosophy and its emasculation and the revival of philosophical tradition in 1950-70s; the collapse of ideology and reception in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

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### **Introduction**

Philosophy in Russia is a belated guest which only two centuries ago began to feel like the mistress in the Russian house. Russia had already numbered nearly a thousand years of statehood, when philosophers appeared there, philosophers due to their professional activities and ways of presenting their results to the public.

Issues related to the specifics of philosophizing in Russia always caused increased and heightened attention associated with generating the disease complex of “philosophical inferiority”, arising from comparing with state of affairs in the West.

After all, it is assumed that every great nation has a distinctive mature philosophy as one of the main components of the usual set of great culture, and here is a paradox of a thousand years of statehood and a lack of professional theoretical thought.

Indeed, the case with the philosophy in the Russian situation was not the best: it would appear as a sustainable academic education very late and would be subjected to systematic prohibition, direct repression to its representatives both in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; it would be cultivated by not professional philosophers and writers, critics and public figures; and would experience the strong

pressure of non-philosophical forms of religion and politics. However, who is to say that anyone in Russia can live all this time having fun and carefree? Why this happened, what civilization, socio-political and spiritual circumstances are to blame for it, how and in what direction did they line vectors of philosophical development? In attempt to answer these questions, we align thereby the scope of our review: milestones and vicissitudes of the evolution of different forms of Russian philosophizing throughout last two centuries, according to the changing social and spiritual situation.

**Environment and factors forming  
intellectual communities  
and the first philosophical “crystallized”  
circles (“period of circles”): 1810-30s.**

As a rule, the philosophy in the separate form appears among other forms of social consciousness relatively late, influenced by major changes in the organizational foundations of existing spiritual practices. The context of these changes is, in many cases, political pluralism, cosmopolitanism in the spiritual sphere, the development of commerce, the crisis of traditional religions [Collins. Pp. 1021-1110]. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there is a kind of these changes and conditions.

In Russia previously philosophizing was mainly for clergy. Educated bureaucrats, as well as receiving an excellent education and training aristocrats could also be regarded as certain intellectuals.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some external to intellectual people conditions significantly changed. These were exclusive factors associated, as in the case of Peter the Great, crowned with someone’s personality.

Firstly, it is quite long lasting and steady liberalism of young Emperor Alexander I; here we see an impact of fascination of the aristocratic

elite with fashionable French Enlightenment, and his Grandmother Catherine flirting with Voltaire. Very moderate political modernization of Alexander I was more than compensated by a free discussion of the constitution, which was unprecedented for Russia a kind of original political pluralism.

Secondly, other important factors were the geopolitical shifts because of the Napoleonic Wars, the Great Patriotic War of 1812 and the campaigns of Russian troops in Europe. There was a famous coincidence of changes in consciousness and changes in social and political circumstances, which led to a fundamental shift that gave rise to the organizational phenomenon of noble Revolutionism, which in turn became the beginning of the liberation movement in Russia.

Thirdly, there started unheard before religious freedom of thought, initiated by the same liberal tsar. Christianity was discredited by the very same power: the sole ruler of all Russia with his friends was fond of “universal”, “unclerical” Christianity of Quakers and other protestant denominations, the mystique of the Masons, forbidding any criticism of Western religions. The main part of the Russian Orthodox Church, with rare exceptions, either kept obsequious silence, or even played the same game.

Such never-yet-seen political and religious freethinking, although short-lived, however, managed to raise both the Decembrists and future leaders of nonacademic institutions dealing with philosophizing, so Nicholas II rollback was unable to affect minds’ change. During these years, the emerging community of intellectuals of the two capitals found a relatively independent economic source of earning, rather than state-owned reptilian existence for a salary. Again, in the context of the permitted freethinking the publishing market opened, which meant books, magazines and newspapers.

All these factors formed the first *civilian* public pro-intellectual attention having been occupied before by state officialdom and special media, complemented by small talk, laity and particular class interests. Later in this new civil public space of intellectual attention there was famous *focusing* of ideological conflict between Slavophiles and Westernizers in 1830-40s, which marked the beginning of many lines of succession, including the philosophical one.

In parallel, there were serious, though less public events in the university sphere, the sphere of education of noble youth, which seriously affected the subsequent philosophical interests of a large part of Russian intellectuals during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was a volte-face of the Western philosophical idols, a completely different type of mental activity and the format of philosophizing began to develop. The matter is “German turn” in the preferences of Russian intellectuals, which occurred on the university grounds. Lecturers changed, then students changed. This involves a sort of missionary by a number of invited from abroad talented German philosophers, lecturers that influenced the generation of Russian professors; “inseminating” students with ideas of German philosophy so that later they became founders of the national philosophical tradition of 1830-40s.

Due to significant differences from Western European countries – despotism, tight control over the minds and conservative religiousness Russian philosophy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was divided into three fairly autonomous institutions. These were governmental or controlled by the state and the church university and spiritual-academic philosophy, as well as “free” or journalistic-publishing philosophy, not associated with the official institutions. In each of these entities there was a kind of its own philosophizing.

### **University and spiritual-academic philosophy in Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

University philosophy in Russia only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century acquired traits of professionalism and maturity. Education, especially higher education, was valued and appreciated everywhere, but only in Russia, it also gave a title of nobility. Cultural role of the university philosophy was to create and maintain a certain intellectual level of the nation.

The peculiarity of the Russian university philosophy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was that it was highly dependent on the despotic state, remaining only a supplement to the public, non-university thought.

It was the official service with strict regulations both in the terms of duties, and in strict determining the content to be taught. As now, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ministry of Education exercised control over the entire system of universities, primarily for personnel and curriculum. Any disloyal professor could be fired in no time and on what occasions one wanted, and in general philosophy was repeatedly banned.

The first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be described as the first stage in the development of university philosophy in Russia: *reception* and *enlightenment*. Reception of new philosophical ideas from Germany was the result of “landing” of the German professors, who at this time were of a higher level of professionalism in comparison to those philosophical missionaries from Germany in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Schellingism (then Hegelianism) was the first unifying spiritual form, which created a unified field of intellectual attention for not only philosophical professors, philosophers and the public, but also for other specialists.

However, further university philosophy had hard times, questioning its very existence. The second stage in the university philosophy

was the stage of “pogroms”. Emperor Alexander I exhausted his limits of liberalism and there began a gradual “cooling” in public life and the education system. In 1817 there was published the highest manifesto, which announced objectives of the reform of public enlightenment in the direction of its closer interaction with religion, Orthodox theology, *jus divinum*, as they had been recognized as a reliable antidote to the pernicious influence of European philosophical currents. In the 1820s there were so-called “professors’ cases”, 5 professors were eventually dismissed.

From 1826 to 1835 the teaching of philosophy at Moscow University was forbidden. However, the main thrust was to come. In 1849 the Minister of Education P.A. Shirinskii-Shakhmatov, as tradition says, used the legendary phrase that has become the ideological justification of repression against the university philosophy in the context of the impression by the European events in 1848: “while the use of philosophy is not proven, the harm from it is possible”. And on June 22 in 1850 there was issued the Supreme Order of the Emperor, according to which philosophical departments and faculties in Russia were closed and only logic and experimental psychology were left for a teaching by the professors of theology and lecturers of the law.

Only the beginning of a new liberal cycle of Russian development, associated with the reign of Alexander II, led to the restoration of university philosophy by the decree dated 02.22.1860. The period of “thaw” continued and in 1863 a new university charter was adopted, which gave a fairly broad autonomy to universities.

So the third period began (1860-70s). In the development of university philosophy it is the period of *reconstruction* and *development* on a new, more liberal basis, characterized by intensification of interaction with the other two

philosophical environments in Russia: spiritual-academic philosophy and the public one, and the resumption of active contacts with German universities in the preparation of the philosophy specialists. The first time there was a serious problem with the staff, which was solved by inviting professors of theological academies, philosophically educated prominent journalists and sending the most capable students to Germany.

Charter of 1863 (although then cut in 1884, still preserved its core) provided all the power to corporation professors of this university, who formed the University Council. This led to the gradual formation of the mentality of a research professor, who should combine teaching with development of their own concepts.

Prior, recovery period made it possible to ease coming of the fourth period (1880-90s – the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). That was the *appearance of a full-fledged university philosophy*. Its decisive characteristic was the creation at the universities of the unified field of intellectual attention and competing philosophical positions represented by certain groups of thinkers involved in partnerships or continuity and having fierce ideological battles.

Features and history of *spiritual-academic philosophy* in Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were a more convincing than in the case of the university proof of the thesis that the nature of intellectual development is closely related to the specifics of its material and organizational framework. Such factors that in the case of university philosophy limited autonomy and narrowed the thematic horizons, here in the spiritual and academic philosophy become an exaggerated form of dogmatic control and repetition of widely anticipated themes.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Russia there were four theological academies: in Kiev, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan. They were supported

by 44 seminaries. As the church in general, theological academies were quite self-contained, self-replicating structures. Almost all of its theologians, with a few exceptions were from the church class, the sons of priests, acolytes, deacons, etc. It is quite clear that the main task of theological academies in the field of philosophy was to protect the faith.

Whereas university philosophy felt the administrative burden and there were repressions, in the theological academies until 1869 there prevailed generally rector's autocracy. Such a regime was also reinforced from the inside, since the very origin, former family and seminary training formed quite effective self-censorship. And there was one particular circumstance, being dependent on Russian church internal history. The academies disposed a clear dominance of the black clergy over white, namely priests. All senior and influential positions were occupied by monks. Throughout the whole system the preference was given to persons willing to become monks. Teachers from the laity and even priests were overlooked, they say, priestly duties should not interfere with teaching.

Some democratization occurred in 1869 with the adoption of a new charter, when a part of the managerial and supervisory functions were transferred to the Council with the participation of professors.

It is obvious that the subject of teaching and the issues discussed were predictable, including Platonism, Eastern Orthodox patristic heritage and the discussion of the leading philosophical trends of Western culture. The main problems were: the relation between faith and reason, in the Russian Orthodox Academies this problem turned slowly into the problem of the relationship of (Orthodox) faith and (European) knowledge; criticism of rationalism, the autonomy of the human mind and its apotheosis in the German

transcendentalism; justification of the distinctive character and the specific content of orthodox philosophy, which was presented in opposing Western Christianity.

In three of four academies there appeared some continuity in the development of religious philosophy.

Philosophical continuity of religious idealism is detectable in the history of the Moscow Academy: Father F. Golubinskii → V. Kudriavtsev-Platonov → Alexei Vvedensky. These three lecturers and philosophers, one after another, worked there during a century before World War I.

Moscow religious idealism experienced the strong influence of German philosophy in the face of Jacobi and Lotze. Earlier Golubinskii defined the basic directions: ontologism in understanding of the human soul (rootedness of all our spiritual movements in God as the "infinite being") and the immediacy of perception of God in our spirit.

Apparently, V. Kudriavtsev-Platonov was the most speculative (creative) and systematic philosopher in this Moscow sequence. He developed an ontological understanding of God as Being that unites matter and spirit in the doctrine of transcendental monism: the beginning of the unity of the world lies outside world. The 20<sup>th</sup> century produced a new generation of Moscow religious philosophers: M. Tareev, Metropolitan A. Khrapovitsky, Father P. Florensky.

In Kiev there was its own line of theism: Innokentii → Father I. Skvortsov → V. Karpov, A. Novitskii → Archimandrite Theophane (P. Avsen'ev) → S. Gogotskii, P. Iurkevich. Kiev line, although revealing obviously some extraordinary thinkers (P. Avsen'ev, P. Iurkevich), could not continue the line of the Moscow School.

Petersburg tradition of spiritual and academic philosophy was as such: F. Sidon-

skii → V. Karpov → M. Karinskii. The St. Petersburg school, apparently, was more eclectic than the Kiev one. However, one can note a greater impact of European philosophy professors on the work of the local philosophizing lecturers.

**Great ice drift of Russian thought:  
opposition of 1830-40s**

Crucial for Russian division of philosophy in “Slavophiles” and “Westernizers” occurred during 1836-1842. The significance of the events of this time is that it became the first public split between the intellectual community in two Russian capitals, not only into literature or political parties, but also into fractions with different worldviews with distinct philosophical and historyosophic dominants. These factions formed stable group identity, acquired historical genealogy, symbols of group unity, ensuring their continuity and lines of succession until the present day.

Subjects of dispute gave rise to the formation of common space of attention and clear opposing positions: Russian national identity and cosmopolitanism; originality of cultural trails in the history and unity of the mankind; true religion – for the individual and the nation.

Westernizers were usually an active, leading and provocative part in these disputes. In general they used to be idols of radical youth and win. Only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, public attention of intellectuals turned from materialism, positivism and atheism and slowly began to move towards idealism, religion and intuitional in favor of Slavophiles.

Salons, public lectures and magazines were as “a playground” for disputes. They were as if widening circles of publicity, starting from a fairly narrow range of preferred disputants and their support groups with equal social status, to a more democratic and broad audience of

higher education institutions, up to the maximum possible at the time the “intellectual podium” in magazines.

As a result of a frontal collision, by the end of 1830s two famous factions had been crystallized. Slavophiles (leaders: A. Khomyakov, I. Kireevskii, M. Pogodin, S. Shevyrev, K. Aksakov, Iu. Samarin) considered their views as developing the thoughts of the Eastern Fathers of the Church. True and complete knowledge is possible only in a joint activity of the mind, emotions, will and faith. Spirit is preserved in the true faith, which came to Russia from clean sources of Orthodoxy, and sets the historical mission of the Russian people, which is the preservation of the original uncomplicated Christianity. Orthodoxy and the tradition of communal lifestyle formed deep foundations of the Russian soul – original folk morality based on love; statism and sobornost’ (collegiality).

Westernizers had more numerous kernel: P. Chaadaev, A. Herzen, V. Belinsky, T. Granovsky, K. Kavelin, N. Ogarev, and others. In contrast to Slavophiles, they did not expose any bizarre metaphysical constructs. It was not necessary for them. They were supporters of innovation and progress, and as follows from their definition, considered themselves immune to controversy and denials. What to argue about, if any progress is certainly good, any old thing is no doubt obsolete, so if anyone needs to be protected, they are the proponents of antiquity. Their entire platform was based on one simple thesis, ascertaining old Russian involvement in the context of the world, especially in the European history.

Fateful clash of 1830-40s gave birth to two contradictory trends dominating the development of the intellectual community in Russia: religious and metaphysical, idealistic one and rational-efficient tendency, prone to materialism, positivism and atheism.

### **Radicalism of 1850-60s**

Approval of radicalism priority in Russian intellectual life of 1850-60s is associated with a period of socio-political crisis in 1859-1862. Once a glorious generation of 1830-40s died or went abroad, the generation born in 1820-30s entered the public forefront. And these were the people of other social origin and other embedded mental formation, inspired by leftist rhetoric of Belinsky and Herzen, in contrast to the moderate liberals, who were Westernizers of noble origin.

Dominant position in the Russian thought of 1850-60s was westernizing radicalism, some of them were inclined to call their positions “nihilism” or “realism”, based on Feuerbach, English utilitarianism and positivism. The radicalism of the group was determined by the thought of its leader N.G. Chernyshevsky, who wanted to subordinate all spheres of theoretical and practical activities to the revolutionary tasks’ solution for future transformation of society. There was no “pure science” for him, and his philosophical position was determined not by speculative visions and interests, but by the principle of party affiliation. Radicalism was also expressed in the rejection of continuity and even of the old tradition of Western values. It was in the form of almost teenage confrontation with the “fathers”, which involved not only “soft” liberals such as Turgenev or Granovsky, but the former radicals as Herzen or even Belinsky. Radicalism was also disposed almost in caricature self-identification with Western extreme theories.

The group had several leaders: N. Chernyshevsky, N. Dobrolyubov, D. Pisarev. The main directions can be enlisted with the help of the following theses. Positivism: realism, worship of the exact sciences: when words and illusions die, facts remain. Vulgar materialism: life and spirit are entirely derived and withdrawn from the scope of physical and chemical processes: still there is no a microscope, which

could follow the work of thought in the brain of a living person. The combination of utilitarianism and personalism: rational egoism and the cult of strong personality, which is bold and radical in protecting their natural rights. Rejection of idealist aesthetics: this very reality is always above art.

Thus, 1850-60s were under the undisputed influence of Western-oriented thinkers. Obviously, even more than before, in 1830-40s they determined the subjects, dictated tastes, their views, though clearly one-sided and extremist, were considered new and progressive and were in demand, both in the intellectual, and commercial senses (demand and fashion for magazines of revolutionary democrats).

#### **The Era of Foundation:**

**“three sources, three components  
of the “homeland thought” –  
existentialism (Dostoevsky),  
ethics (Tolstoy)**

**and religious metaphysics (Solovyov)**

These twenty years, which replaced the era of radicalism and shocks, were, on the one hand, the period of transition, on the other hand, the period of formation. Still the majority of young people were influenced by the radical faction of Westernizers’ successors like Belinsky and Chernyshevsky of 1870-80s. This radicalism resulted in the “Great Terror” of these decades and its apotheosis – regicide. Radicalism remained a constant feature of Russian spiritual and socio-political landscape, moreover, through three decades it became the dominant trait.

However, in these years, we see the first attempts to compromise and overcome the opposition between Westernism and Slavophilism. They also bred the present grounds of national thought. The main figures, whose writings and public fame mark this time of reform and terror, became symbols of original Russian

thought; these were F. Dostoevsky, L. Tolstoy and V. Solovyov.

As for his philosophical originality, Dostoevsky is perhaps the key thinker of the “Golden” Age of Russian culture, if not all of its new formation. He is the forerunner of Western European activism and Russian personalism. The essence of his insights, which subsequently became the immense field of existential senses for philosophical reflection and a canon for many of his followers, can be represented by the following propositions:

→ among people there are “strong” individuals, driven by motives of strive for freedom and love, and a “mass” of weaker individuals (mediocre, normal), whose three life incentive momenta are wealth (“bread”), reason of existence (“miracle, mystery and authority”) and the need for world unity [Dostoevsky. Pp. 277-292];

→ willfulness, but not calculation, reason or benefit, is the real basis of human freedom, the source of original identity, but also the cause of spirit disorder, concealing, in addition, the seed of death [Zen’kovskii. Pp. 229-236];

→ acting irrationally and thus fully realizing their freedom, people then are inevitably punished for their behaviour, and the punishment gives them intense pleasure, equal to that of crime, and also this punishment pushes people to gain self-knowledge.

Tolstoy, another contender for the all-Russian spiritual leadership, after the sudden death of Dostoevsky, became the most prominent media leader and started his philosophical and political activities.

While Dostoevsky set existentialist, personalistic content of Russian philosophy, Tolstoy brought to it ethical pathos, perfectionism in love of truth and search for the truth, acquisition of morality and love. He did not believe in the existence of any supernatural

world or God. He cared about only one thing: what shall I do, how shall I live? The search for meaning in life, condemnation of the authorities and the official religion, the establishment of the doctrine of non-resistance to evil by force also became one of the main life conditioning factors both for a Russian intellectual and Russian philosophy.

Tolstoy’s pantheism, like that of Spinoza, is of Eastern origin. According to Tolstoy, Being as the Tao of Confucius or Lao Tzu, is an ethical Absolute (righteous path, what is due to be done) or “god”, that stands for the harmonious unity of matter and spirit, and the universal, eternal integrity, and cosmic love. Love unites everything; it is the meaning of the Whole, both of universum and society. People can find inner harmony only via “clinging” to this Whole, rationally realizing their own functionality and interconnectedness – through the approval of general non-aggression (non-violence). Such panmoral idea, representation of collectivist community of Russian people, caught Tolstoy’s mind in the days of writing “War and Peace”, but it passed from the figurative and art area into conceptual one, when in 1880s he was occupied by reflection and religious criticism.

The influence of Tolstoy’s thinking on the subsequent Russian philosophical thought and culture is great: it is the maximization of the ethical component of our consciousness – to seek the truth and live according to the truth, the absolute truth.

With all undoubted Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy’s fundamentalism for Russian thought, it was Solovyov, who initiated a direct impact on the transformation of the intellectual field in the direction of “Silver Age” settings of Russian philosophy.

He proclaimed the task of unification of Western philosophical form with Eastern spiritual content, science, philosophy and religion.

Traditional form for such syntheses has always been pantheistic arguments.

Solovyov's pantheism is original, like that of Tolstoy, it is also an alloy of Western and Eastern thought: Schellingian Absolute develops according to logical emanation of Neo-Platonism, its internal power is shadow-unconscious in the spirit of Boehme and Kabbalah, and the most complete incarnations of absolute are specific superpersonality of Jesus and God-manhood, as in English Hegelianism. Isn't Solovyov an eclectic? Such a view is repeatedly expressed. However, this view is still denied by Solovyov's own original ideas – bright images-concepts, of mystical nature: Sofia and God-manhood. The first is the result of bright and romantic, personal mystical experience, the second is the conceptualization of his ascetic religious and unifying activity.

These three great personalities inspired and constructed spiritual metaphysical foundations of modern Russian intellectuals' understanding of the world, their existential sense of the world, ethics' idealism and organic metaphysics. They created a new "national form" of Russian style of thinking – universal humanity, the union with God and renewal of Christianity.

**The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:  
basic positions and confrontation lines**

The main events in the philosophical life of "Silver Age" were theoretical collisions between religious philosophers and Russian neo-Kantians. Their debate was about the future path of development: whether it should be a common with the West way of philosophy academization and professionalization, or a special way, which had been charted by Khomyakov and Solovyov. This special way implies creation of own Orthodox philosophy based on the patristic tradition and expressing Russian primordial mentality.

Position of "*Russian religious philosophy*" was expressed by N. Berdyaev (S. Bulgakov, E. Trubetskoy, L. Lopatin, P. Florenskii, V. Ern, et al.): West philosophy experienced disunity with the living being, "anti-realism". It opposed subject and object sharply and unreasonably, in the end there was formal and empty thinking. The basis of the original Russian thought is organic, Eastern Christian culture supported by ancient traditions, which show peculiar commitment to Logos and personalism.

The main opponent to Russian religious philosophy was the position of a coalition of representatives of the St. Petersburg University philosophers and a group of young philosophers. Total unifying principle was critical philosophy of Kant and the interest in cognitive and ethical issues. These were philosophers of the older generation – university professors of philosophy: Alexander Vvedensky, I. Lapshin, and "neo-Kantians" – young people, who had an academic internship in neo-Kantian Germany at the turn of the century. Leaders of this direction were B. Iakovenko, S. Gessen, F. Stepun and G. Shpet. Consolidating group was formed, inspired by the international journal "Logos", that is why they were often called "*logosovtsy*".

Philosophy as such, they believe, cannot have a national face, and there has not been any Russian philosophical tradition yet. The task was to educate and create an independent from religion and ideology, highly technical and professional philosophy on Russian grounds, by its secularization and mastering techniques of thinking. The so-called "Orthodox philosophy" was considered rather scholastic and arrogant in its nationalism, eclectic and irrational, the expression of cultural savagery and unwillingness to learn the basics of professionalism. It was stated necessary to learn from the German philosophy, to create their own, but European as for the level of skill. That was the simple set of

theses proposed by young neo-Kantians of the journal “Logos”.

In addition to these two positions, the most prominent in the field of intellectual attention of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, others were: Russian positivism, personalism (N. Lossky), Marxism (orthodox people, headed by Lenin and revisionists), Russian Space. Meanwhile, a completely different era with a very different philosophy was about to come.

### **Formation of Soviet philosophy, 1920-40s**

It is hard to find in history such periods and such societies in which philosophy would have been given so much attention from the powers, and in which philosophers, or rather those who are considered as such, almost commanded other pundits. But this is the case of the philosophy of the Soviet Union after the October Revolution until Stalin’s death.

The first people in the country read philosophical books, the supreme authority in the country (the Central Committee, Politburo, Secretary General) took an active part in philosophical discussions, issued decrees on abstract philosophical issues and published books. Could we see such a situation elsewhere?

However, the philosophy itself was restricted first to Marxism-Leninism, then to Stalinism, there was no trace of freedom of expression and pluralism.

At first, those who had seized power, the radical left decided to send into exile most authoritative dissenting intellectuals, which was done in the campaign, called “philosophical ship”. Deportation was at the end of the autumn of 1922, when two runs of German passenger ships brought from Petrograd to Stettin more than 160 people. Among the deportees were philosophers Berdyaev, Lossky, Bulgakov, Ilyin, Frank, Karsavin, Vysheslavtsev, S. Trubetskoy, Lapshin, Sorokin.

After the expulsion of the philosophical elite abroad there were only Marxists left. They began internal squabbles: who has more correct understanding of Marx? Debate on the role of the dialectical method in relation to the modern natural sciences formed three factions in the Soviet philosophy. They took the place in the second half of the twenties and early thirties – in print, as well as in public universities, research institutes, numerous departments. During this time, hundreds of articles have been published, thousands of speeches were made in the course of public debates.

Marxists, inclined to positivism, then received the label “mechanists”; they expressed the mood of scientists concerned about the very real, as indicated by the subsequent development, fear of dictate from aggressive philosophical systems. They (I. Stepanov-Skvortsov, L. Axelrod, A. Timiriachev, A. Bogdanov et al.) argued that there is no area for philosophizing, separate and apart from science: Marxist philosophy – is the latest and most general conclusions of modern science.

Group of A. M. Deborin, “deborinty” or “dialectics” saw the main task of philosophy in developing a universal methodology for all sciences – dialectics. Besides, studying the works of Hegel was thought the best way of mastering this most magical dialectical method.

First “dialectics” were winning, then they were dispersed too, and the power came to descendants from the Institute of Red Professors – “dialectical materialists”, led by young careerists M. Mitin and P. Iudin, who stood at the helm of Soviet philosophy until perestroika.

The main results of these discussions are: short theoretical self-destruction of Marxist philosophy, turning it into a maid of policy under the leadership of “the great Stalin”. It was in the prewar period, when a dogmatic image of Marxism was formed. All philosophical “work”

was seen as a summary and commentary on the works and ideas of Stalin. As early as in 1938 a special resolution declared “History of the CPSU (b)”, including the chapter about “Dialectical and Historical Materialism”, an “encyclopedia of basic knowledge of Marxism-Leninism”, which gives an official interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, not allowing any arbitrary interpretations. The search for truth in philosophical debates inevitably led to the conclusion that the objective truth was in the Kremlin, and the main philosopher in the country was Stalin.

Results of “dark” for the Soviet philosophy three decades (1923-1953) were disastrous and led to the practical destruction of the old, already relatively highly developed philosophy

### **Soviet philosophy in 1950-80s**

As a result of the preceding development one of the historical forms of philosophy, Marxism-Leninism, became a state ideology.

But philosophy, like phoenix, is reborn again and again. In 1950-80s in Russia an autonomous and self-sufficient philosophical community formed again. Even small indulgences and allowances for differences immediately led to an increasingly growing diversity of viewpoints. After the death of the tyrant over the next decades three layers as part of the community of Soviet philosophers took shape gradually.

The first – “Marxist priests”, who held philosophical and bureaucratic positions and their entourage were cogs in the party apparatus of power, theoretically supporting its decisions, being, by analogy with the medieval scholastics, faithful “servants of ideology”.

Another layer – lecturers, whose commitment to Marxism and the ideology was selflessly dedicated, defined either by professional socialization or general Soviet indoctrination, being the type of social and natural beliefs of “religion by birth”.

Yet the focus of attention of the intellectual public was on the creativity of the people of the third layer, who were to become the paramount figures in importance and influence on the development of non-formal thought in the country.

The main form of non-conformist structuring of a field of intellectual attention in Soviet philosophical, lecturing and academic environment became an informal institutionalization that connected people not by a particular subject, but by the personality of the author of the project.

Such associations became an organizational basis for the formation of several positions in the informal Soviet philosophy.

Position, that can be called for the purpose of discussion *critical Marxism* was personified by E. Ilyenkov. His credo was modernization and creative problematization of Marxism. Ilyenkov proposed new moves and attractive strategies in the development of Marxist philosophical principles: the universality of human rights; praxeological interpreted Perfect, from the position of activity; theory of the imagination; development of materialist views in dialectical logic, and others.

His cosmology is unusual. According to it, a destiny of man, reasonable life – as the highest form of existence of matter lays at the end of the cycle of the universe (as a result of the inevitable cooling), so a man should sacrificing himself, returning dying universe back to the starting point of its development – to a thermonuclear collapse.

*Historical and philosophical* trend generated a sequence of students who were trying to develop their own projects in philosophy. In 1970s Mamardashvili with his doctrine of “negative ontology of the individual” dominated the other.

Like Socrates, he believed that philosophy is not so much professional mental work, but rather

a way of human existence, who woke up, realized that they are human. Philosophy, thus, is freedom, implemented through a philosophizing person.

A special feature of Mamardashvili's interpretation of connection between the real and professional philosophy is the emphasis on the live act of philosophizing – verbal communication, where every time a new thought is born. He always emphasized the need for philosophy to maintain connection with the live expression of human spontaneity through the cultivation of its authentic language of irreducible symbols, rather than concepts. Purpose of the person is to be able to materialize a thought about freedom in free action, and the idea of good in an act of kindness.

#### **Russian philosophy in 1990 – the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Two forces were initiators and actors of democratization, awakening from Marxist-Leninist rigidities. These were intellectuals of the sixties (both in the Komsomol, Central Committee, and in the literature and artistic bohémias) and younger intellectuals of both capitals, who had been brought up semiexplicit worshipping the West, from its jeans to existentialism.

Basically, massive black, debunking the Soviet regime PR was done in the form of famous Jacobin liberalism by “builders of perestroika”, but also many worthy intellectuals were seriously captured by liberal ideas in their radical interpretation.

Another important factor of a fundamental change in the intellectual landscape in Russian philosophy was its transition from Soviet to Russian phase. It produced a powerful stuffing with a large amount of new information in the Russian public consciousness, and specifically in the humanitarian community.

Publication of an array of works of Russian philosophers shocked no less than denunciations

of Stalinism. In the early 1990s Russian philosophers (Berdyayev, Ilyin, Frank, Bulgakov, Florensky et al.), as well as Solzhenitsyn became symbols of a distinctive way of Russian development, which was interrupted by the Bolshevik revolution.

At the same time there began a wave of translations and publications of Western philosophical literature, which Russian people had long been deprived of. First these books were the “old modern classics” of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Bergson, Dilthey, Heidegger, Freud and many others. Then came the postmodern wave. Ideas of postmodern authors have played the same dramatic, emancipatory role, as in the West, even more significant in terms of the former fortress of the Soviet system of thinking and Russian natural tendency to seek and posit total metaphysical truths.

The defeat of the ideology and the new ninth wave of spiritual import caused a profound identity crisis of the intellectual community. Previous identities had been destroyed, new were gained in a difficult and slow way.

The allegedly formed by the mid 1980s, unified field of attention within the Soviet philosophy was lost because combining conceptual system of coordinates, themes and issues had disappeared. In addition, Russian intellectuals were abundantly overfed with new ideas, having been saved up behind the “iron curtain” during last 70 years, and the “digestive system” of Russian people refused to work, plunging its owners in the state of spiritual lethargy and apathy.

A situation of chaotic pluralism and multidirectional motion was combined with the absence of the unified field of intellectual attention. There are, however, some conceptual closed groups like “Neo-Marxists”, “cognitive scientists”, “postmodernists” and “Neo-

Slavophiles”, but they have almost no common ground and common vocabulary necessary to communicate and develop at least a platform for discussion.

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## **Философствование в России: динамика в социокультурном контексте**

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*Статья посвящена анализу основных этапов и перипетий эволюции разных форм отечественного философствования в течение последних двух веков – в зависимости от меняющегося социокультурного контекста. Выявляются особенности среды и факторы складывания сообщества интеллектуалов, первые философские кристаллизации в начале XIX в. Затем рассматривается специфика философствования в трех разных интеллектуальных нишах российского общества того времени: университетской, духовно-академической и так называемой свободной (журнально-публицистической). Основное место уделяется анализу динамики последней из них: складыванию основных диспозиций в поле интеллектуального внимания – славянофилов и западников, радикализму 50-60-х гг., эпохе Основания – деятельности Достоевского, Толстого и Соловьева, столкновениям начала XX в., складыванию советской философии и ее выхолащиванию, возрождению философской традиции в 50-70-х гг., краху идеологии и рецепции конца XX в.*

*Ключевые слова: русская философия и социокультурная динамика.*

*Научная специальность: 09.00.00 – философские науки.*

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