

DOSTOEVSKY AND HIS INFLUENCE UPON THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF NICOLAS BERDYAEV

by

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the  
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## Abstract

Dostoevsky--the master novelist--is a unique product of the Russian tradition. He inherited the values of Orthodoxy, of Slavophilism, of Westernism, of rationalism and of romanticism and in his turn contributed to almost every subsequent manifestation in literature from the enlightened mysticism of Aldous Huxley and the pessimism of Hardy to the despair of modern atheist existentialism and the pessimistic optimism of Berdyaev and Marcel.

Dostoevsky's work is the joy of all those who delight in paradoxes--and Berdyaev revels in them. His great novels are at the same time different from and more than they seem. They are symbolical and allegorical on the highest level. At least that is how they affect me and how they seem to affect Berdyaev.

I would like at this time to express my deep appreciation to Dr. J. St. Clair Sobell, Head of the Department of Slavonic Studies at the University of British Columbia, for his great generosity and encouragement; to Dr. Cyril Bryner for his unflagging assistance, coöperation and understanding; and to Mr. A.W. Wainman, who was the first to confront me with the 'tortured questionings' of Dostoevsky.

## Preface

Dostoevsky has played a decisive part in my spiritual life. While I was still a youth a slip from him, so to say, was grafted upon me. He stirred and lifted up my soul more than any other writer or philosopher has done, and for me people are always divided into "dostoevskyites" and those to whom his spirit is foreign. It is undoubtedly due to his "cursed questioning" that philosophical problems were present to my consciousness at so early an age, and some new aspect of him is revealed to me every time I read him. "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor", in particular, made such an impression on my young mind that when I turned to Jesus Christ for the first time I saw him under the appearance that he bears in the Legend.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Nicolas Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, (tr. by Donald Attwater), Sheed & Ward, 1934, p. 7.

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## INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

### A Short Biography of Nicolas Berdyaev

#### 1. Background

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## A Short Biography of Nicolas Berdyaev

### Background

Nicolas Alexandrovitch Berdyaev was born in 1874 of an aristocratic family in Kiev . His father, Alexander Mikhailovitch, was a man of wide culture , particularly well-read in the field of history . As a young man he had been a cavalry officer. On retirement he became "Marshall of the Nobility", an office created by Catharine the Great to attract more of the nobility into public affairs. His father showed no religious tendencies at all. As he grew older he seemed to become only more and more liberal in outlook. Berdyaev's mother, Alina Sergeevna, was half French by birth. Her mother was a Countess and her father Prince Kudashev. Alina Sergeevna was distinctly Western. Though she was born an Orthodox, her sympathies were with Roman Catholicism and, as her son remarked, always prayed from a little French Catholic prayer-book.<sup>1</sup> She spoke hardly anything but French, finding it difficult to compose even an elementary sentence in Russian. It was with his mother that Berdyaev , at the age of seven,

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1. Nicolas Berdyaev , Dream and Reality, An Essay in Autobiography, Macmillan Co., 1951, pp. 2 - 5.

first travelled outside of Russia--to Karlsbad and then to Vienna. Berdyaev's grandfather and great-grandfather had both held the office of Governor-General in South Russia, while his grandmother and great-grandmother had run away to become nuns.

(a) Berdyaev as a child

The tradition of the army comprised by far the greater part of Berdyaev's background. It was therefore logical that young Nicolas Alexandrovitch should be sent to the Kiev Cadet Corps to receive his early education. Of this period he was to write:

To this day I consider that there are few things more revolting than the kind of conversation which goes on among young boys: it is a source of corruption. The cadets seemed to me particularly uncouth, commonplace, and intellectually callow. Moreover my comrades sometimes laughed at the nervous tic from which I had suffered since childhood. I did not develop any feelings of comradeship, and this affected my whole life.<sup>2</sup>

The members of the Berdyaev family were prone to various neuroses and Berdyaev was the inheritor of an acute nervousness "which expressed itself in spasmodic movements". His erratic, yet comfortable family life had "as it were, affinities with the Tolstoyan world and yet had something of the intensity and complexity of Dostoevsky."<sup>3</sup>

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2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Ibid., p. 17.



## (b) Dostoevsky as a child

Dostoevsky writes:<sup>4</sup>

I descended from a pious Russian family. As far as I can remember myself, I recall my parents' affection for me. We, in our family, have known the Gospel almost ever since our earliest childhood.

The first book Dostoevsky read was Four Hundred Stories from the Old and New Testament, replete with faded lithographs of the creation of the world, Adam and Eve in paradise, the deluge, etc.<sup>5</sup> At an early age Dostoevsky read Zhukovsky's poetry and the occasional work by Pushkin.<sup>6</sup> He writes:

I was only ten when I already knew virtually all the principal episodes in Russian history--from Karamzin whom, in the evenings, father used to read aloud to us. Every visit to the Kremlin and Moscow cathedrals was, to me, something solemn.

### Early Readings

At the age of fourteen Berdyaev read Schopenhauer's World as Will and Idea, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, and Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind--all

4. Dostoevsky, The Diary of a Writer, (tr. by Boris Brasol), Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949, Vol.1, p. 152.

5. Henry Troyat, Firebrand, the Life of Dostoevsky, Roy Publishers, 1946, p. 29.

6. J.A.T. Lloyd, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947, p. 5.

7. Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, Vol. 1, p. 152.

of which he had found in his father's library.<sup>8</sup> At this time also he plunged deeply into the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky which he described as being of greater importance to him than philosophical and theological schools of thought and from which he derived his Christianity.<sup>9</sup>

8. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. 37. In his Slavery and Freedom (pp.11-12), Berdyaev writes: "I am not a philosopher of the schools and I do not and I did not belong to any school. Schopenhauer was the first philosopher whom I took in deeply...while still a boy.... I feel a special affinity with the dualism of Kant, with his distinction between the realm of freedom and the realm of nature, with his doctrine of freedom as of a character which is apprehended by the mind, with the Kantian doctrine of the will, with his view of the world of phenomena as distinct from the real world.... I find myself close also to Schopenhauer's distinction of will and 'representation', to his doctrine of the objectification of the will in the natural world, which creates an unreal world and to Schopenhauer's irrationalism."
9. Ibid., p. 80. "My own initiation into philosophy has been largely due to Dostoevsky, whose creative work has far-reaching anthropological and metaphysical implications" (p.304). "I feel utterly one with Ivan Karamazov, who was driven mad by the tears of a single little child. The problem of the justification of God in face of the measureless pain in the world has always been a source of infinite torment to me" (p.57). And in Slavery and Freedom (p.12) Berdyaev shows his debt to Leo Tolstoy: "Tolstoy's revolt against the false standards of greatness and the false sanctities of history, against the falsity of all social position and the social relations of mankind, penetrated my very being."

(a) The Lure of Marxism

At the age of twenty, Berdyaev entered the University of Kiev with the intention of studying natural science. His interest, however, lay in philosophy. Here he came under the sway of Marxism--a fashion at the time for those students with any kind of passion for social justice. Berdyaev recalls how at this age people used to call him Stavrogin and how much he secretly relished the identification. "I liked being the aristocrat of the Revolution, the dark-haired nobleman, gleaming with life and wearing the mask of cold aloofness."<sup>10</sup> Berdyaev was attracted to Marxism because, like Herzen, Ibsen<sup>11</sup> and Dostoevsky, he was deeply concerned with the relationship between the individual personality and society.

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10. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. 25.

11. For Ibsen, thinking revolved around private ethical problems. Society was the expression of the principle of evil. "He saw in it nothing but the rule of stupidity, of prejudice and force." (Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951, Vol. 2, p. 916).

What attracted me most of all was its characteristic appreciation of the moving forces below the surface of history, its consciousness of the historic hour, its broad historical perspectives and its universalism.<sup>12</sup>

(b) Dostoevsky's attraction to the socialism of Sand

In his tribute to George Sand, Dostoevsky felt that she based her socialist convictions not upon an "ant-necessity"--a favourite Dostoevskian rebuke--but upon a moral feeling for man, "upon the spiritual thirst of mankind and its longing for perfection and purity."<sup>13</sup> The novelist exclaims, "I must have been about sixteen years old when I first read her.... I recall that I was in a state of fever all night."<sup>14</sup>

Dostoevsky, looking at the social problems of his day from the viewpoint of the intelligentsia, was profoundly disturbed by the deepening gulf between the classes and the ever-increasing atomization of society. He saw a solution in reunion of the educated with the simple, faithful people, from whom they had become estranged. For Dostoevsky, the people represented an "all-unifying, universal human principle

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12. Op. cit. p. 117.

13. Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, p. 349.

14. Ibid., pp.345-6.

which in all sinfulness and humiliation embrace God."<sup>15</sup>

### Berdyaeu as an idealistic Marxist

Whilst still in the Marxist ranks, Berdyaeu attempted "to show the possibility of a synthesis of critical Marxism and the Idealist philosophy of Kant and partly of Fichte."<sup>16</sup> He was an idealistic Marxist who maintained the existence of truth and goodness as idealist values independent of the class struggle and refused to subject philosophy and ethics to the revolutionary class struggle.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, Berdyaeu was reprimanded by Plekhanov who insisted that it was impossible to remain a Marxist while maintaining an independent idealistic philosophy.<sup>18</sup>

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15. Vyacheslav Ivanov, Freedom and the Tragic Life, Harvill Press, 1952, p. 80.

16. Berdyaeu, Autobiography, p. 122.

17. Nicolas Berdyaeu, Slavery and Freedom, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944, p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 14.

## (a) Arrest and Exile

In 1898 Berdyaev was arrested along with one hundred fifty other Social Democrats and exiled to the northern province of Vologda. Here his lot was not a hard one since the governor of this northern territory was a distant relative of Berdyaev's grandfather.<sup>19</sup> In 1901, after his return from exile, Berdyaev went to Germany where he enrolled at the University of Heidelberg. Here he continued his activities in liberal and revolutionary movements. In 1904 he left Germany and returned to St. Petersburg.<sup>20</sup>

This was the time of the Russo-Japanese War and the march of Father Gapon upon the Winter Palace--of strikes, pogroms, assassinations, mutinies and the first Duma--a too-late attempt to bring liberal democracy to Russia. As Berdyaev remarked, it was constitutional democracy that was Utopian in Russia--Bolshevism, in theory and practice, became realistic politics.

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19. Matthew Spinka, Nicolas Berdyaev: Captive of Freedom, Westminster Press, 1950, pp. 14-5.

20. At this time Berdyaev married Lydia Yudiforvna Trushev, the daughter of a brilliant and wealthy lawyer. She had, at one time, been active in revolutionary movements and had twice been arrested and imprisoned. She was yet contemplative and mystical by nature. After her marriage she became a Roman Catholic and devoted herself to writing poetry.

(b) The Paper Problems of Life

During the years 1904-6 Berdyaev edited with Sergius Bulgakov a review named The New Way and after its quick failure, the magazine Problems of Life, a paper which combined many tendencies.

Politically the paper belonged to the left, the radical school of thought, but it was the first in the history of Russian periodicals to combine that sort of social and political ideas with religious enquiry, with a metaphysical outlook and a new tendency in literature. It was an attempt to unite those who had been Marxists and, becoming idealists, were moving towards Christianity, with Merezhkovsky and the symbolists, in part with the representatives of the academic philosophy of the idealist and spiritual school and with journalists of the radical tendency.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, Berdyaev concludes, "the synthesis was not organic enough and could not be durable."<sup>22</sup>

(c) Mystical Anarchism

After the Revolution of 1905 Berdyaev was particularly receptive to a movement known as 'mystical anarchism' whose principal spokesmen were the poet Chulkov and Vyacheslav Ivanov. Harking back to the words of Ivan Karamazov, "I accept God, but I do not accept his world", the mystical anarchists preached a

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21. Nicolas Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, Geoffrey Bles, 1947, p. 246.

22. Loc. cit.

total break with the external world in order to free the spirit.<sup>23</sup>

### A Spiritual Renaissance

Among the more cultured Marxists there had been a more and more vociferous demand that philosophy, art and religion break free from the despotism of the dialectic. Berdyaev had been one of these. There was also a marked return to religion and a real spiritual rebirth in literature. Such writers as Merezhkovsky and Rozanov greatly stimulated the young Berdyaev. The new poetry of symbolism--Alexander Blok, Bely and Vyacheslav Ivanov appealed to the youthful philosopher and became a most penetrating factor in his intellectual environment. And of course there was Berdyaev's early moving encounter with Dostoevsky which later largely determined his actions and thoughts.

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23. This view is in direct opposition to that which Dostoevsky through Father Zossima revealed in The Brothers Karamazov, where all that is unconscious in the world is good in essence--trees, flowers, animals, children, etc. But on man a difficult morality is placed since, endowed with consciousness, he has the ability to choose between right and wrong. If sin exists it is because man has not been good enough. There is no justification for shifting responsibility on to an unjust God and an evil world.



(a) Reaction in the Orthodox Church

In 1907 Berdyaev left St. Petersburg for Paris where he spent the winter studying Catholic modernism and French syndicalism. At this time he broke with the symbolist Merezhkovsky and his circle and on returning from Paris, settled in Moscow, rather than St. Petersburg. By this time the Orthodox Church had reached its zenith of reaction even to the point of coöperating with the government in the nefarious pogroms of the "Black Hundred" organization. Berdyaev was fully conscious of this and agreed with Dostoevsky that the Church was paralyzed, that insincerity, self-interest, and conventionality were everywhere apparent. "The most creative and valuable elements of society had left the Church and Orthodoxy assumed a wholly governmental character."

(b) Back to Religion

In March 1909 a group of ex-Marxists and other "God-seekers" published a book, Milestones (Vyekhy), which proclaimed disillusionment with all forms of

humanism and positivism<sup>24</sup> and attempted to summon the intellectuals "back to religion". Berdyaev, along with Frank, Struve, Ternavtsev and Gershenzon, was one of the chief contributors to Milestones. In 1911 he wrote Philosophy of Freedom--a work which showed his ever-increasing interest in mystical realism which had been more or less taken over from Jacob Boehme, Angelus Silesius, John Tauler and Franz von Baader. The year before the Revolution Berdyaev published The Meaning of the Creative Act, in which for the first time an eschatological note is introduced. In this work Berdyaev lays particular stress on remoteness in the realization of the Christian ideal.<sup>25</sup> The year after the revolution

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24. Spinka, Berdyaev, pp. 30-3. In his Autobiography (pp. 91-2), Berdyaev says: "I have never been a materialist or a positivist, although at one time I denied God. Even my atheistic convictions had other roots than those provided by materialism and shared by my fellow-students: it was, in fact, an inverted religious conviction, an anti-theism rather than an atheism, implying a denial not of God but of the man-made image of God, of what I believed to be the traditional religious conceptions and travesties of Him."

25. Ibid., pp. 45-6.

Berdyayev produced a piece of polemical diatribe under the title--The Philosophy of Inequality.<sup>26</sup> Written before the author had experienced a "spiritual catharsis",<sup>27</sup> Berdyayev afterwards regarded it his most unsatisfactory book.

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26. A typical passage from Filosofia Neravenstva: Pisma k nedrygam po sotsialnoi filosofii, Obelisk, 1923, p. 44: "Inequality is repeatedly justified religiously as the individual destiny of the human personality for eternity.... Inequality is the foundation of the cosmic system and of harmony, and is the justification for the very existence of human personality itself and the source of every creative movement on earth.... Out of inequality even man was born. An absolute equality would leave being in an incomplete state, without distinction--that is not-being." Concerning the events of 1917, Berdyayev writes on Page 12: "A spiritual revolution has nothing in common with your outward materialistic, political and social revolutions. Marx never was a revolutionary of the spirit...but Dostoevsky was...and you have always deemed him a conservative and reactionary."

27. Ibid., p. 243.

## Berdyaev and Bolshevism

1919 finds Berdyaev less bitter and more humble. "Bolshevism is my sin, my guilt,"<sup>28</sup> he confessed.

The Russian Revolution has fulfilled Dostoevsky's anticipations. He has prophetically laid bare its ideological dialectic and has depicted its image. Dostoevsky understood that Russian socialism is a religious question, a question of atheism; that Russian revolutionary intellectuals are not concerned with politics, but with the salvation of humankind without God.<sup>29</sup>

From 1919-20 Berdyaev delivered a series of lectures on The Meaning of History<sup>30</sup> at the Free Academy of Spiritual Culture which he had founded in 1918 by the authorization of Kamenev. In 1920 Berdyaev was appointed to the chair of philosophy at the University of Moscow<sup>31</sup> and the same year was arrested by the Cheka.<sup>32</sup> Because of his noticeably lukewarm affection for Bolshevism, Berdyaev was summoned and interrogated at midnight by the fanatical head of the Cheka, Dzerzhinsky and his deputy chairman, Menzhinsky. At this meeting Kamenev was also present

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28. Nicolas Berdyaev, The End of Our Time, Sheed and Ward, 1933, p. 71, published first at Berlin in 1924.

29. Ibid., p. 84.

30. Published in Berlin, 1923.

31. Spinka, Berdyaev, pp. 63-4.

32. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. 236.

and heard Berdyaev talk for more than half an hour, stating his religious and philosophical reasons for rejecting Communism. Berdyaev, perhaps because of his friendship with Kamenev, was summarily released. During the winter of 1920-1 he delivered a series of lectures on Dostoevsky<sup>33</sup> and in 1922 was once more arrested-- this time by the G.P.U.<sup>34</sup>

### Exile and Death

In 1922 Berdyaev began his life in exile in Berlin. Here, with the help of the International Y M C.A., he organized the Religious Philosophical Academy and taught, as departmental dean, at the Russian Institute of Sciences.<sup>35</sup> In 1924 he transferred the Religious Philosophical Academy to Paris where two years later he founded the religious-philosophical review Put, (The Way), which he continued to edit until the outbreak of World War II. On March 24, 1948, after only a brief spell of ill-health, Nicolas Alexandrovitch died at his desk-- amongst his papers and books.

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33. Published in Berlin, 1923.

34. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. 239.

35. Spinka, Berdyaev, p. 66.

## CHAPTER I .

DOSTOEVSKY AND HIS INFLUENCE UPON THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF NICOLAS BERDYAEV

Chapter I.

Slavophilism and Russian Thought

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2. Moscow as the "Third Rome"
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3. Khomyakov
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DOSTOEVSKY AND HIS INFLUENCE UPON THE PHILOSOPHY  
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Slavophilism and Russian Thought

The Orthodox background

An analysis of the thought of Dostoevsky and Berdyaev is impossible without acknowledging the power of the Russian Orthodox Church, for Orthodox asceticism and religious doctrine has penetrated to the very core of these two Christian thinkers. The dominating trend in thought of the Russian Church ever since 988, when Prince Vladimir of Kiev accepted Christianity from Byzantium, has been primarily an ethical one.<sup>1</sup> It asked the question: How is one best to live and how is one to

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1. Most Russian religious thinkers claim this is exclusive to Orthodox Christianity. They regard the Catholic Church as legalistic and the Protestant as primarily social. The ethical content, however, seems primary in most religions.



procure salvation?<sup>2</sup> A characteristic of Orthodoxy is its conception of salvation as "theosis"--the divinization of man and the transfiguration of the cosmos. Russian religious thought consistently teaches that man must himself be a creator. At the same time it regards salvation as inseparable from eschatology.<sup>3</sup> In the East, to be a member of the Church means, above all, to merge one's own life in the flow of grace from heaven and to acquire thereby such gifts as faith, holiness and humility. It is the tendency of Orthodoxy to regard the visible world as a reflection or symbol of some spiritual entity elsewhere<sup>4</sup> which it is the task of the Church to reflect with an ever closer approach to perfection. Perhaps here lies the origin of that search for meaning in history, that straining for a world-wide outlook that is so noticeable a feature of Russian thought. Such a quality<sup>5</sup> in Russian

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2. George P. Fedotov, The Russian Religious Mind, Harvard University Press, 1946, pp.388-90. Fedotov's thesis has been substantiated by numerous writers, including Father Bulgakov, Florinsky and others.
  3. Oliver Fielding Clarke, Introduction to Berdyaev, Geoffrey Bles, 1950, pp. 24-5.
  4. Sir John Maynard, Russia in Flux, Macmillan Co., 1948, pp. 439-440.
  5. This is an interpretation of the liberal and Slavophil wing of the Church. Many of the orthodox Orthodox would not subscribe to it. Numerous works of such well-known Slavophiles as Kireevsky, Khomyakov and even Dostoevsky were suppressed by the authorities as dangerously revolutionary.

Orthodoxy was to provide a substantial foundation for the belief that the Russian Empire had received from God the task of defending the true Faith and of continuing the work begun by Constantine the Great in Constantinople. Above all, it gave impetus to that philosophy of history which was to regard Moscow as the Third Rome.

### Moscow as the "Third Rome"

#### (a) Early exponents

The idea of Moscow as the "Third Rome" was first propounded by an elder of a monastery in Pskov, Philotheus, after the fall of the Orthodox Byzantine Empire in 1453. In his epistle to the Grand Duke Basil III. (1505-33), Philotheus asserts that the Russian Tsar is the only Christian ruler on earth and then remarks that:

...In the God-bearing city of Moscow the Church of the Most Holy Mother of God stands as the representative of the Ecumenical and Apostolic Throne, it shines with light side by side with Rome and Constantinople, it is unique in the whole ecumenical world and shines brighter than the sun<sup>6</sup>.... The first Rome collapsed owing to its heresies, the second Rome fell a victim to the Turks, but a new and third Rome has sprung up in the North, illuminating the whole universe like a sun.... The first and second Rome have fallen, but the third will stand till the end of history, for it is the last Rome. Moscow has no successor; a fourth Rome is inconceivable.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Quoted in Nicolas Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, Geoffrey Bles, 1947, p. 8.

7. Quoted in Nicolas Zernov, Moscow the Third Rome, S.P.C.K., 1937, p. 36.

In 1589 at the installation in Moscow of the Patriarch Job, the highest authority of the Eastern Church pronounced almost verbatim the daring words of the monk Philotheus.

... Because the second Rome, which is Constantinople, is now in possession of the godless Turks, thy great kingdom, O pious Tsar,<sup>8</sup> is the Third Rome. It surpasses in devotion every other, and all Christian kingdoms are now merged in thy realm. Thou art the only Christian sovereign in the world, the master of all faithful Christians.<sup>9</sup>

(b) Chaadaev

This idea of Moscow as the "Third Rome" was to underlie all later Russian thought. Even the paradoxical Chaadaev, although a Westernizer, showed himself eloquently conscious of Russia's unique destiny.

I have a profound conviction that we have a vocation to solve a great many of the problems of social order, to bring about the fulfilment of a great many of the ideas which have taken their rise in societies of the past, and to give an answer to questions of great importance with which mankind is concerned.<sup>10</sup>

Chaadaev was attracted by "the international, non-racial, and morally progressive character of the true Christian religion". He credited the Catholic Church with having

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8. Tsar Fyodor, (1584-98) .

9. Quoted in Nicolas Zernov, The Russians and Their Church S.P.C.K., 1945, p. 71.

10. From Peter Chaadaev's (1793-1856), Apology of a Madman, quoted in Berdyaev, Russian Idea, p. 37.

done far more than Orthodoxy to promote it. The Slavophiles were to leap upon this idea of Chaadaev to attempt to discredit the Catholic Church in order to show that its mantle had now fallen on 'Holy Russia'.<sup>11</sup> Solovyev was to describe this as "the pseudo-Orthodoxy of anti-Catholic theologians".<sup>12</sup>

Khomyakov

(a) Founder of the Slavophil Movement

Along with Kireevsky, the first modern and secular Church and the chief founder of the Slavophil movement was a retired officer of the Royal Guard, Alexei Khomyakov (1804-60). In his Notes Upon World History, Khomyakov describes the conflict of two

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11. Richard Hare, Pioneers of Russian Social Thought, Oxford University Press, 1951, p. 16.

12. In his work, Russia and the Universal Church, Geoffrey Bles, 1948, p. 46, Vladimir Solovyev (1853-1900), describes his fellow patriots and their infatuation with what is called "The Russian Idea": "According to them Orthodoxy, or the religion of the Greco-Russian Church, in contrast to the religious bodies of the West, constitutes the true basis of our national being. Here, to begin with, is an obvious vicious circle. If we ask how the separated Eastern Church justifies its existence we are told: By having formed the Russian people and provided its spiritual nurture. And when we enquire how that people justifies its existence, the answer is: By belonging to the separated Eastern Church".

principles in history--freedom and necessity, spirituality and materialism.<sup>13</sup> 'Kushitstvo' was the term he used to describe Western Rationalism and Roman Catholicism, which for him represented necessity and materialism. On the other hand, he applied the term 'Iranstvo' to Russia, which he believed signified freedom and spirituality.<sup>14</sup> Khomyakov had an indelible faith in the destiny of Russia. He was convinced that Russia's vocation was not to be the richest or most powerful country, but to become "the most Christian of all human societies".<sup>15</sup> In the middle of the Nineteenth Century at a time when belief in progress, science and individualism was universal, Khomyakov was almost alone in prophesying the impending doom of an order based on the self-sufficiency of man and over-confident trust in the power of human reason.

(b) 'Sobornost'

However, it is in the conception of Russian 'sobornost' that the value of Khomyakov's ideas is most

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13. Berdyaev, Russian Idea, pp. 44-5.

14. "Though the few critical minds among the early Slavophiles were painfully aware how far from perfect Russia actually was, they were ready to take the undisputed 'fundamental' perfection of Russia for an actuality. They compared the idea of Russia, as they constructed it, with Europe's reality, and arrived, naturally enough, at self-complimentary conclusions." Hans Kohn, The Twentieth Century, Macmillan Co., 1949, p. 101.

15. N. O. Lossky, History of Russian Philosophy, International Universities Press Inc., 1951, p. 40.

apparent. For Khomyakov, 'sobornost' implied the harmonious conjunction of human freedom and unity based on a common love for the same absolute values. He stressed the interrelation in Christianity of love and freedom.<sup>16</sup> Since Christianity is a religion of love it is also a religion of freedom.<sup>17</sup> In the words of Khomyakov 'sobornost' which he believed the unique feature of Orthodoxy is "opposed both to authoritarianism and to individualism. It is a unanimity, a synthesis of authority...liberty in love which unites believers."<sup>18</sup>

16. Ibid., p. 41.

17. That the Slavophil movement has been profoundly influenced by the "Non-possessor" heritage and the teachings of St. Nil of Sorsk is shown by the stress on freedom in religion. The tradition of the "Non-possessors" (the mystic followers of St. Nil, who in the middle of the Sixteenth Century were opposed to the stern ritualism of the Josephites) made a noticeable reappearance in the Eighteenth Century in the person of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724-83) who was to serve as the inspiration for Dostoevsky's 'starets' Father Zossima in The Brothers Karamazov.

18. Quoted by Sergius Bulgakov, The Orthodox Church, Centenary, 1935, p. 74. "Sobornost constitutes a third principle absolutely distinct from religious individualism as represented by Protestantism and the authoritarianism of Catholicism" (Berdyayev, Towards a New Epoch, Geoffrey Bles, 1949, p. 54). Berdyayev interprets 'sobornost' as the "interior concrete universalism of personality" (Berdyayev, Slavery and Freedom, pp. 68-9); "the inward, organic and harmonious aspect of Catholicity" (Berdyayev, The Origin of Russian Communism, Geoffrey Bles, 1948, n. p. 87) and as freedom enlightened by grace (Berdyayev, The Beginning and the End, Geoffrey Bles, 1952, p. 131).

In 'sobornost' the gift of the spirit is conceived as an undivided and indivisible whole, present in the council or the congregation.<sup>19</sup> The gift of truth is attributed to the whole Church, not to isolated individuals nor to the hierarchy.<sup>20</sup> Truth and love reside in the brethren not in any of them taken separately.<sup>21</sup> In the words of Vladimir Solovyev: "There is no kingdom of Heaven for the individual. His salvation must be a corporate one along with his fellows".<sup>22</sup>

Kireevsky

(a) Romantic Slavophilism

The ideas of Ivan Kireevsky (1806-56) showed more Romanticism than those of any other Slavophil.<sup>23</sup> Kireevsky was a religious mystic imbued with "a strong love of Russia and faith in her great destiny." To Kireevsky "wholeness" was the peculiar virtue of the Russian character. This principle of "wholeness" dominates his philosophy.<sup>24</sup> In 1856, in Koshelev's revue Russian Conversation Kireevsky elaborated the

19. Maynard, Russia in Flux, p. 51.

20. Ibid., p. 59.

21. Ibid., p. 51.

22. Quoted by Maynard, Russia in Flux, p. 99.

23. To Kireevsky is attributed the remark: "the best thing to be found in the world is a vision." (Berdyayev, Russian Idea, p. 48.)

24. Lossky, Russian Philosophy, p. 19.

concept of collectedness in his article The Possibility and Necessity of New Principles in Philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

(Man) should not regard his logical capacity as the one and only instrument for the apprehension of truth;...the promptings of aesthetic thought taken in isolation should not be considered independently of other concepts as a sure guide to the comprehension of the ultimate nature of the world; not even must the ruling love of the heart be thought of separately from the other claims of the spirit as an infallible instructor in the achievement of the highest good; man must constantly seek in the depth of his soul that inner root of understanding, where all the separate faculties unite in one living whole of spiritual vision.<sup>26</sup>

Only through intuition, "life-knowledge" as Kireevsky called it, the "idea feeling" as Dostoevsky named it, can man arrive at true understanding.<sup>27</sup> According to

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25 . Ibid., p. 17 .A. Koshelev (1806-1883) ..

26 . Ibid., quoted p. 20 .

Cf. Dostoevsky's Letters from the Underworld, published in 1864. "Reason is an excellent thing-- I do not deny that for a moment; but reason is reason and no more, and satisfies only the reasoning faculty in man, whereas volition is a manifestation of all life. It is true that, in this particular manifestation of it, human life is all too frequently a sorry failure; yet it nevertheless is life, and not the mere working out of a square root. For my own part, I naturally wish to satisfy all my faculties and not my reasoning faculty alone (that is to say a mere twentieth portion of my capacity for living). For what does reason know? Reason only knows that man possesses a certain capability of apprehension". (Letters from the Underworld, Everyman's Library, 1945, pp. 33-4) .

27 . Hans Kohn, Prophets and People, Macmillan Co., 1946, p. 146 .



Dostoevsky that "deep understanding which transcends all reason" was peculiar to the Russian people "rooted in their...feeling of sobornost."<sup>28</sup> Once man has united all his spiritual powers into a harmonious whole only then Kireevsky believes does man attain a mystical intuitiveness into the understanding of superrational truths . Man must conduct his thought "through the domain of logic" --yet the knowledge gained is not true knowledge--rather a stepping-stone to the summit of hyperlogical knowledge which is "inexpressible".<sup>29</sup> For Kireevsky only the presence of such metalogical principles as the Absolute or God makes possible the earthly joys of love, sympathy, intuitiveness and mystical experience.<sup>30</sup> The mind which ignores the superrational truths abstracts purely the rational elements and for Kireevsky this must end in chaos as for Dostoevsky it ends in atheism, nihilism and suicide. Kireevsky's metalogical principle combined with his concept of the "wholeness" of existence appears again in the philosophy of Florensky, Bulgakov and particularly Berdyaev.<sup>31</sup> "The whole truth is only revealed to the whole man."<sup>32</sup> This ideal of integral knowledge as an organic

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28. "The West has taken the "I" as the starting point, the Russians the "We"; the West, the thinking individual, Russia the concrete and immediate experience of community." (Simon Frank, Die Russische Weltanschauung, Rolf Heise, 1926, p. 21) .

29. Lossky, Russian Philosophy, p. 21.

30. Loc. cit.

31. Ibid., p. 29.

32. Ibid., p. 404 .

all-embracing unity is brought about only through the combination of all man's powers--the senses, rationality, aestheticism, morality and religion.

(b) Kireevsky and Khomyakov

Both Kireevsky and Khomyakov exaggerated the spiritually unifying qualities of the Russian people and set them in opposition to the sterility and formality of a "soulless" Europe. At the same time they rejected any idea of a rigid, static and despotic State. Rather they desired a peaceful, patriarchal monarchy which would allow the greatest amount of autonomy to the people. They were firmly convinced that Russia was presaging the true Christian society.<sup>33</sup> Neither Kireevsky nor Khomyakov<sup>34</sup> worked out a systematic philosophy but they laid the spiritual foundation of later philosophical thought in Russia which was to concern itself primarily with the systematic development of a Christian 'Weltanschauung'.

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33. Armand Coquart, Dmitri Pisarev et l'idéologie du Nihilisme Russe, Institut d'études Slaves, 1946, p. 15.

34. "With Khomyakov philosophy depends upon religious experience as the primary Thing, to such an extent that he even speaks of the dependence of philosophical apprehension upon belief in the Holy Trinity!" (Berdyayev, The Russian Idea, p.161).

## Other Slavophiles

## (a) The Aksakovs

In a letter to Dostoevsky the famed Russian diarist Sergei Aksakov<sup>35</sup> defined Slavophilism as the "Christian idea pushed to its furthest limits."<sup>36</sup> His son Konstantin Aksakov<sup>37</sup> who carried on the Slavophile tradition felt that the Russian people continually aspired not to the building of a perfect state, but to the creation of a Christian society. Consequently he considered the Russian ideal to be infinitely harder and more impracticable than that of the purely political, state-minded Western nations.<sup>38</sup>

In the West, they kill souls and replace them by the perfecting of political forms and the establishment of good order and by police action. Conscience is replaced by law; regulations become a substitute for the inward impulse; even charity is turned into a mechanical business in the West; all the anxiety is for political forms.... At the foundation of the Russian State there lies spontaneity, freedom and peace!<sup>39</sup>

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35. Sergei Aksakov (1791-1859), great Russian prose writer and father of Konstantin and Ivan Aksakov.

36. Janko Lavrin, Dostoevsky and His Creation, W. Collins & Co. Ltd., 1920, p. 177.

37. Konstantin Aksakov (1817-1860), one of the most talented Slavophiles. In the Fifties he expounded his views in a Moscow weekly, The Rumor (Molva).

38. Hare, Social Thought, p. 141, and Berdyaev, Russian Idea, p. 49.

39. Berdyaev, Russian Idea, quoted on p. 43. On p. 48 Berdyaev refers to K. Aksakov disparagingly as "a growing infant...believing in the perfection of pre-Petrine institutions."

## (b) Pogodin

In 1838 Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin,<sup>40</sup> a professor of Russian history at Moscow University wrote in his

History:

The time of European nations is past, their strength runs out. They can produce nothing higher in religion, law, science, or art, nor have they carried mankind to its moral good. Now the future belongs to the Slavs who will serve mankind. Russia, as the representative of the Slav race, will fuse ancient and modern civilization, reconcile heart and head, establish everywhere law and peace, and prove that mankind's goal is not only liberty, art, and science, or industry and wealth but something higher--the true enlightenment in the spirit of Christianity, the guidance by God's word which is assurance of all happiness.<sup>41</sup>

## (c) Tyutchev

In 1848 the great Slavophile poet Tyutchev<sup>42</sup> wrote in his Russia and Revolution:

The West is dying, everything crumbles, everything collapses in the general conflagration, the Europe of Charlemagne as well as the Europe of the treaties of 1815, the Roman papacy, and all the Western

40. Pogodin (1800-75), noted publicist and historian. In 1841 he founded in Moscow a conservative monthly magazine Moskvitianin markedly Slavophile in tone. This magazine continued until 1855.

41. Kohn, The Twentieth Century, quoted on p. 103.

42. Fyodor Tyutchev (1803 - 73), one of Russia's foremost lyrical poets. In his Diary of a Writer (Vol. 1, p. 425), Dostoevsky quotes approvingly four lines by Tyutchev addressed to Russia.

"Thee, my land, in days distressing,  
Christ, our Lord, in slavish dress,  
Burdened with the crucial stress,  
To and fro traversed blessing."

Cf. In Dostoevsky's writings, "Christ roams throughout the Russian land clothed as a beggar."

kingdoms, Catholic and Protestant, faith long since lost and reason reduced to absurdity. Above this vast shipwreck, appears, like an Ark of the Covenant, the Russian Empire, more vast than ever. Then who will dare to doubt the Russian mission?<sup>43</sup>

(d) Danilievsky

The naturalist and founder of scientific Slavophilism Nikolai Danilievsky<sup>44</sup> believed Russia was different and distinctly unique because God had willed each race or nation to be different. Just as each species of birds is distinctive and preserves its own characteristics, so also does each nation preserve its individual institutions, its particular characteristics, its concept of justice and its distinctive ideals.<sup>45</sup> Thus, for Danilievsky, the Slavs constitute a species of their own--a family led by "Big Brother" Russia which is endowed with the spirit of God and destined to lead the

43. Quoted in Hare, Social Thought, p. 136, and also Kohn, Twentieth Century, p. 106.

It is not difficult to understand why Tyutchev was so much admired by the later Pan-Slavists. Here is a sample from his poem Russian Geography written as early as 1829. (p.132 Hare, Social Thought)  
 "Seven inland seas and seven mighty rivers,  
 From the Nile to the Neva, from the Elbe to China,  
 From the Volga to the Euphrates, from the Ganges to the Danube,  
 That is the Russian Empire."

44. N. Y. Danilievsky (1822-85) belonged with Dostoevsky to the Petrashevsky group (see below). He was an authority on Darwinism and on the habits of fish. He was the author of a historico-philosophical treatise Rossiia i Evropa (1871).

45. Anatole Mazour, Russia Past and Present, D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1951, p. 35.

Slav nations along the path of glory.<sup>46</sup>

During the middle of the Nineteenth Century Russian intellectuals came under the influence of French Utopian Socialism. The philosophical ideas of Cabet, George Sand, Louis Blanc, Sain-Simon, Proudhon, and particularly Fourier were much in fashion. From 1845-9 such figures as Dostoevsky, Danilievsky, Saltykov-Shedrin and Pleshcheev would gather weekly at the home of Petrashevsky<sup>47</sup> and discuss current political tendencies. There were no attempts at violence or revolution amongst the Petrashevsky Circle,<sup>48</sup> only an academic desire to arouse the dormant public to think.

46. Danilievsky sets up "cultural historical types as he sets up types in the animal world. There is no civilization which holds good for all mankind, no common history of man. All that there can be is a richer cultural historical type which associates more characteristics within itself." (Berdyayev, The Russian Idea, pp. 65-66).

47. To Petrashevsky is attributed the statement: "Finding nothing worthy of my attachment either among women or among men, I have vowed myself to the service of mankind." (Berdyayev, The Russian Idea, p. 99; and also Berdyayev, Origin of Russian Communism, p. 32).

48. The figure of Stavrogin in The Possessed is supposedly based on the figure of N. Speshnev--an extreme revolutionary of the Petrashevsky circle.

# Nicolas Fedorov

The influence of the enigmatic philosopher Nikolai Fedorov (1828-1903) should not be ignored. Fedorov was a "selfless soul, who felt acutely that each was responsible for all, who desired men to live neither for themselves nor for others, but, in the spiritual sense of the word, with all."<sup>49</sup> Like Tolstoi he exposed the falsity of culture and desired a complete change of the world. "He was a Russian searcher after universal salvation in whom the responsibility of all for all reached its ultimate and most trenchant expression."<sup>50</sup> Dostoevsky was to write of Fedorov: "He aroused my interest more than enough. I am essentially in complete agreement with his ideas, I have accepted them, so to speak, as my own."<sup>51</sup> Fedorov's philosophy was projective and active<sup>52</sup> not contemplative or theoretical. In his Philosophy of Common Work Fedorov does not passively reflect the world but actively strives to transform and improve it. Everything can be accomplished by active

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49. Avrahm Yarmolinsky, Dostoevsky, A Life, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1934, p. 350.

50. Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, p. 208.

51. Ibid., p. 209.

52. Fedorov advocated a unity of theory and practice like Marx and Engels and Berdyaev himself (see his introduction to Slavery and Freedom).

work but not by passive thinking and knowledge.<sup>53</sup> Death, for Nikolai Fedorov, is the one and ultimate evil--the true vocation of man is to resurrect life. Fedorov's Philosophy of Common Work is sharply tinged with Messianism. The Russian people are to commence the common work of redeeming the world's spiritually dead.<sup>54</sup> Although Berdyaev has described Fedorov's philosophy as "naïvely realistic and simple-minded"<sup>55</sup> and his ideas as belonging "rather to natural science than to philosophy",<sup>56</sup> he sees in Fedorov's desire for universal salvation not only a deep manifestation of love and 'sobornost' but a real victory over what he calls "transcendent religious egoism".<sup>57</sup>

#### The Animating spirit of Russian Nineteenth Century Philosophy

It is particularly noticeable from Slavophile thought that the fundamental idea of Russian philosophy is "the idea of the concrete existent, of the underlying real existence which precedes rational thought".<sup>58</sup> In

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53. Nicolas Berdyaev, "N. F. Fedorov", The Russian Review, Vol. 9, No. 2., April 1950, p. 129.

54. Ibid., pp. 125-30.

55. Berdyaev, The Beginning and the End, p. 233.

56. Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, p. 210.

57. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935, p. 324.

58. Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, p. 160.



Russian philosophy faith is contrasted with knowledge in the same way as spirituality is contrasted with materialism.<sup>59</sup> The animating spirit of Russian philosophy is Plato, classic German idealism and mysticism.<sup>60</sup> Essentially its interests are religious and its self-acquired mission is to mediate somewhere between religion and science. Thus it can be said that Russian philosophy aims, in its own distinctive way, at the objectivication of mysticism.

The varied contribution of Slavophil thought such as the rationalism of Khomyakov, the romanticism of Kireevsky, the idealism of Tyutchev and the empiricism of Danilievsky finds a form of synthesis in the works and philosophy of Russia's giant novelist Dostoevsky.

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59. Thomas G. Masaryk, The Spirit of Russia, Vol. 2, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1919, p. 477.

60. Ibid., p. 487.

## CHAPTER II.

## Chapter II.

### Dostoevsky--An Interpretation of His Philosophy

1. Irrationalism and the 'will'.
2. The 'Man-God'.
3. The Russian Idea.
4. Suffering.
5. Love.
6. Beauty.

## Dostoevsky--An Interpretation of His Philosophy

### Irrationalism and the 'will'

In 1854, in a letter from the penal colony at Omsk to the devout Mme. Fonvizina, Dostoevsky wrote:<sup>1</sup>

... I have formulated my creed wherein all is dear and holy to me. This creed is extremely simple: here it is: I believe that there is nothing lovelier, deeper, more sympathetic, more rational, more human and more perfect than the Saviour; I say to myself that not only is there no one else like Him, but that there could be no one. I would even say more: If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with the truth....

In The Possessed there is a character strikingly akin to Dostoevsky in the figure of Shatov. When asked by Stavrogin if he believed in God Shatov replies:<sup>2</sup>

'I believe in Russia...I believe in her orthodoxy...I believe in the body of Christ ....I believe that the new advent will take place in Russia....I believe...' Shatov muttered frantically.

'And in God? In God?'

'I...I will believe in God.'

All his life Dostoevsky fluctuated between belief and non-belief. He could think with Ivan Karamazov but feel with Alyosha. He who could experience the

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1. J. Middleton Murry, Fyodor Dostoevsky, A Critical Study, Martin Secker, 1923, p. 78.

2. Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Possessed, Modern Library, 1936, p. 253.

spiritual purity of an Alyosha only the next moment would be seared by the ruthless skepticism of an Ivan. "If it happens that I try to explain an idea I believe in, it almost always happens that I cease to believe what I have explained."<sup>3</sup> By means of psychological insight and incomparable skill Dostoevsky projects the reader into the mind of one of his "doubles"

Yes, I am really split in two mentally, and I'm horribly afraid of it. It's just as though one's second self were standing beside one; one is sensible and rational oneself, but the other self is impelled to do something perfectly senseless, and sometimes very funny; and suddenly you notice that you are longing to do that amusing thing, goodness knows why; that is what you want to, as it were, against your will; though you fight against it with all your might, you want to. I once knew a doctor who suddenly began whistling in church, at his father's funeral.<sup>4</sup>

In Letters from the Underworld Dostoevsky emphatically defends human personality as something distinct and autonomous. As the 'undergroundling' he expresses his unequivocal belief in free will:

Would it not be a good thing...to live our lives again according to our own stupid whims?...Man loves to act as he likes, and not necessarily as reason and self-interest would have him do. Yes, he will even act straight against his own interests. Indeed, he is sometimes bound to do so....<sup>5</sup> Science will in time show man that he does not possess any

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3. Fyodor Dostoevsky, A Raw Youth, Macmillan Co., 1916, Chapter 2--Versilov speaks..

4. Ibid., Versilov, with perfect frankness, confesses his undisguised schizophrenia.

5. Dostoevsky, Letters from the Underworld, pp.30-1.

will or initiative of his own, and never has done, but that he is as the keyboard of a piano, or as the handle of a hurdy-gurdy<sup>6</sup>....What but the handle of a hurdy-gurdy could a human being<sup>7</sup> represent who was devoid of desires or volition?<sup>7</sup> ...Every human act arises out of the circumstance that man is forever striving to prove to his own satisfaction that he is a man and not an organ handle.<sup>8</sup>

Already in The Landlady in 1847 Dostoevsky had introduced in embryo the first spasms of the self-willed and proud Man-God mentality in the person of old Murin when he asserts: "Let each man live the life he wills".<sup>9</sup>

#### The 'Man-God'

Behind all Dostoevsky's creative art lies the unceasing search for an Absolute Value.<sup>10</sup> Throughout his work he shows that personalities are moved, not only by science and reason, but by an irrational force

6. Ibid., p. 29.

7. Ibid., p. 32.

8. Ibid., p. 37., Berdyaev, along with Andre Gide, Henri Troyat, Leon Chestov, E. H. Carr, E. J. Simmons and Janko Lavrin, affirm that Letters from the Underworld is the keystone to Dostoevsky's entire work. As indeed did Dostoevsky's contemporary, the critic Apollon Grigoriev, who exhorted the author to write only in such a vein.

9. Dostoevsky, The Landlady, Everymans Library, 1945, p.290.

10. Janko Lavrin, Dostoevsky and His Creation, p. 57.

which "sways and dominates them the origin of which is unknown and inexplicable...the longing for an absolute self-assertion, the eternal search for an Absolute Value".<sup>11</sup>

In The Possessed Stavrogin succeeds in the "killing" of God and ends up not with absolute freedom but in an absolute void. Stavrogin is another one of Dostoevsky's 'Man-God' creations who would have been likely to shout with Nietzsche "God is dead--long live the Superman." Not the "Man-God" but the "God-Man" is Dostoevsky's ideal superman, one for whom God, the Universe and Eternity are living realities. Dostoevsky emphatically repeats that man has no right to exist if God does not exist.

If God exists, all is His will and from His will I cannot escape. If not, it's all my will and I am bound to show self-will....I am bound to shoot myself because the highest point of my self-will is to kill myself with my own hands.<sup>12</sup>

The titanism of the extreme 'Man-God' Kirillov shows itself once more in his passionate conversation with Stavrogin.

'There will be a new life on earth. History will be seen divided into two vast epochs, the first from the gorilla to the annihilation of the conception of God, and, secondly, from the extinction of God to--'

'To the gorilla?' suggested Stavrogin, with cold mockery.

'To the transformation of the earth and of man physically,' resumed Kirillov calmly. 'Man will be a God and be physically transformed in his powers. The world will be changed, and all things will be changed, including thought and emotion.'<sup>13</sup>

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11. Ibid., p. 113.

12. Dostoevsky, The Possessed, p. 627.

13. Ibid., p. 114.

Kirillov is in many ways a development of the 'Man-God' Terentev in The Idiot and a forerunner of Ivan Karamazov. In his impassioned outbursts Kirillov seems to deny God for the sake of man "and almost in a Christ-like sense offers himself as a sacrifice for the greater glory of man."<sup>14</sup>

I have no higher idea than disbelief in God. I have all the history of mankind on my side. Man has done nothing but invent God so as to go on living and not kill himself: that's the whole of universal history up till now. I am the first one in the whole history of mankind who would not invent God.<sup>15</sup>

Kirillov escaped humiliation by committing suicide. Not so Verkhovensky whose appetite for humiliation and devotion is extreme for a confirmed atheist.<sup>16</sup> Verkhovensky recognizes the necessity of bowing to someone greater than himself. He expresses this feeling with snivelling servility before his god, Stavrogin:

You are my idol! You injure no one, and everyone hates you. You treat everyone as an equal, and yet everyone is afraid of you--that's good. Nobody would slap you on the shoulder. You are an awful aristocrat. An aristocrat is irresistible when he goes in for democracy! To sacrifice life, your own or another's is nothing to you. You are just the man that's needed. It's just such a man as you that I need. I know no one but you. You are the leader, you are the sun, and I am your worm.<sup>17</sup>

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14. Ernest J. Simmons, Dostoevski, the Making of a Novelist, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 283.

15. Dostoevsky, The Possessed, p. 580.

16. Troyat, Firebrand, the Life of Dostoevsky, p. 351.

17. Op. Cit., p. 426.



This is the humiliation of a 'Man-god'. In opposition to such as Kirillov, Verkhovensky and Stavrogin, Dostoevsky sets up the prototype of the 'God-man' such as Alyosha, Father Zossima and Prince Myshkin in whom humility conquers humiliation.

### The Russian Idea

Dostoevsky firmly believed that 'fsyechelovechnost'--the ability to share the point of view of all nations<sup>18</sup> was "the principal personal characteristic and designation of a Russian."<sup>19</sup> In a letter to the Tsarevitch Alexander, enclosed with a copy of The Possessed, Dostoevsky wrote: "...We have forgotten that in the depths of the Russian national spirit dwells the ability to say something new to the entire world, on condition that we maintain our own separate development."<sup>20</sup> That "something new" was Russia's genuine contribution to the world because "the lost image of Christ in all... its purity is conserved in Orthodoxy".<sup>21</sup>

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18. Berdyaev, Origin of Russian Communism, p. 36.

19. Dostoevsky, The Diary of a Writer, p. 342. In his Pushkin speech Dostoevsky, with the greatest solemnity, proclaimed his formula of an all-embracing, all-uniting and all-reconciling Russian and Christian ideal. According to Soloviev, Dostoevsky, in the realm of ideas was "a visionary and an artist, rather than a logical thinker, consequent with himself." (Lossky, Russian Philosophy, p. 119).

20. Stanislas Mackiewicz, Dostoevsky, Orbis Ltd., 1947, p. 171.

21. Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, p. 906.

It is from the East that the new word will be uttered to the world in opposition to future socialism, and this word may again save European mankind. Such is the mission of the East.<sup>22</sup> Every great people believes and must believe if it intends to live long, that in it alone resides the salvation of the world; that it lives in order to stand at the head of the nations, to affiliate and unite all of them, and to lead them in a concordant choir toward the final goal preordained for them.<sup>23</sup>

Using Shatov as his mouthpiece in The Possessed,

Dostoevsky maintained that man could be redeemed only by the healing properties of the Orthodox faith.

Dostoevsky meant not the institutionalized but the idealized Orthodoxy as conceived by Solovyev and later, Berdyaev and Bulgakov--a religion to be marked by freedom and devotion. No matter what "ism" people profess, if they have no religious faith Dostoevsky believed that their foundation was built upon the sand. For Dostoevsky the only firm foundation was religion--particularly Orthodoxy, without which man becomes "possessed".<sup>24</sup>

The object of every national movement, in every people and at every period of its existence is only the seeking for its god, who must be its own god, and the faith in Him as the only true one. God is the synthetic personality of the whole people, taken from its beginning to its end....When gods begin to be common to several nations the gods are dying and the faith in them, together with the

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22. Loc. cit.

23. Ibid., p. 575.

24. Ivar Spector, The Golden Age of Russian Literature, Canton Printers Ltd., 1943, p. 133.

the nations themselves. The stronger a people the more individual their God.... Every people is only a people so long as it has its own god and excludes all other gods on earth irreconcilably; so long as it believes that by its god it will conquer and drive out of the world all other gods.... If a great people does not believe that the truth is only to be found in itself alone (in itself alone and in it exclusively); if it does not believe that it alone is fit and destined to raise up and save all the rest by its truth, it would at once sink into being ethnographical material, and not a great people. A really great people can never accept a secondary part in the history of Humanity, nor even one of the first, but will have the first part. A nation which loses this belief ceases to be a nation. But there is only one truth, and therefore only a single one out of the nations may have great gods of their own. Only one nation is 'god-bearing'; that's the Russian people.<sup>25</sup>

Vladimir Solovyev recalls that on one occasion Dostoevsky spoke of "the woman arrayed with the sun" mentioned in Revelation, and of her crying out "in pain to be delivered" of a man-child. For Dostoevsky, Solovyev declared, the woman was Russia and the child the message she carried for the world.<sup>26</sup>

Do you know who are the only 'god-bearing' people on earth, destined to regenerate and save the world in the name of a new God, and to whom are given the Keys of life and of the new world.... Do you know which is that people and what is its name?<sup>27</sup>

For Dostoevsky that 'god-bearing' people is the Russian people. The author found in Europe not Christianity but a dead and rationalistic formula of the Christian doctrine.

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25. Dostoevsky, The Possessed, pp. 254-5.

26. Avrahm Yarmolinsky, Dostoevsky, p.357.

27. Op. Cit., p. 250.

It was in the religious spirit of the Russian peasants that he found Christ as a living symbol, a mystical reality in man's consciousness.<sup>28</sup> In the words of Berdyaev,<sup>29</sup>

Dostoevsky was the herald of the 'Russian Idea' and of the consciousness of his nation, with all its antinomies and restless uneasiness, its humility and arrogance, its universal compassion and its national exclusivism.

In his many writings Dostoevsky revealed more than any other writer before or after him a religious populism and a Messianic people-worship.<sup>30</sup>

### Suffering

The fundamental spiritual quest of the Russian people is, Dostoevsky believed, their craving for suffering--"perpetual and unquenchable suffering--everywhere and in everything."<sup>31</sup>

It seems that they have been affected by this thirst for martyrdom from time immemorial. The suffering stream flows through their whole history--not merely because of external calamities and misfortunes: it gushes from the people's very heart.<sup>32</sup>

Dostoevsky's greatest characters go through four stages: crime, followed by the punishment of suffering,

28. Lavrin, Dostoevsky and His Creation, p. 184.

29. Nicolas Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, Sheed & Ward, 1934, p.160.

30. Ibid., p. 184.

31. Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, p. 36.

32. Loc. cit.

repentance, and through love, forgiveness. It was Dostoevsky's belief that man's heart possessed the greatest and most poignant pity for all creatures and that through "umilenie"<sup>33</sup> or "melting of the heart", what had formerly been strange and alien becomes part of the individual himself, becomes "dear" to him and he comes to love all creatures, has compassion for their suffering, and shares in their destiny. For Dostoevsky, the greatest thing in the world was love, which he conceived of as evolving only from suffering. It has been frequently maintained that Dostoevsky made a fetish of suffering. However, he did not advocate suffering for its own sake, but rather as the most important means whereby an individual, society or nation could reach the highest end. Pulcheria Alexandrovna in Crime and Punishment is one of Dostoevsky's heroically suffering figures.<sup>34</sup> The mother of Raskolnikov has endured almost every misfortune, has been cruelly tormented by life, yet within her there is an unworldly spirit which cannot be extinguished. In the same book the wry police inspector says to Raskolnikov: "I am convinced that you will decide to 'take your

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33. L. A. Zander, Dostoevsky, (tr. by Natalie Duddington), S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1948, p. 24.

34. Richard Curle, Characters of Dostoevsky, William Heinemann Ltd., 1950, pp. 55-6.

suffering'.... For suffering Rodion Romanovitch, is a great thing.... Don't laugh at it, there's an idea in suffering."<sup>35</sup> In the author's greatest work,

The Brothers Karamazov, Mitya shouts to his accusers:

"I accept the torture of accusation and my public shame, I want to suffer and by suffering I shall be purified."

It is plain that man feels ill at ease when the end of his labor has really been reached. That is to say, he loves to attain, but not completely to attain<sup>36</sup>... May it not also be that he loves adversity? And may not adversity be as good for him as is happiness?... I am not altogether for adversity, any more than I am altogether for prosperity; what I most stand for is my personal freewill, and for what it can do for me when I feel in the right mood to use it.... I feel certain that man never wholly rejects adversity; for adversity is the main-spring of self-realization.<sup>37</sup>

The impact of Dostoevsky's remorseless experiences is felt in these lines:

I can bear everything, any suffering, if I can only keep on saying to myself 'I live'; I am in a thousand torments, but I live. I am on the pillar, but I exist. I see the sun, or I do not see the sun, but I know that it is. And to know that there is a sun, that is life enough.<sup>38</sup>

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35. Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, Everyman's Library, 1948, Part VI., Chapter II.

36. Dostoevsky, Letters from the Underworld, p. 40.

37. Ibid., p. 41.

38. Quoted in Dmitri Merejkowski, Tolstoi as Man and Artist, with an essay on Dostoevsky, Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd., 1902, p. 143.

"Dostoevsky's work" Berdyaev remarks, "is permeated by compassion to a degree to be found nowhere else in the whole of world literature."<sup>39</sup>

He had a deep reverence for human suffering, yet not without reason he is called 'a cruel genius'. The element of cruelty in him is connected with his faith in the redemptive power of suffering. He regarded man as a contradictory being who needs to suffer. His was not an optimistic sort of humanism: it was tragic. At the heart of all his works are to be found the themes of man and his sad destiny.<sup>40</sup>

Dostoevsky's outlook on suffering can best be summed up in his own words, "Friends, do not fear life. Only by suffering can we learn to love life."

### Love

"Christ is the only love of the Russian people, and they love His image in their own way, to the limit of suffrance."<sup>41</sup> For Dostoevsky, man's greatest duty was to love God. For, if there be no God, to love man would be to deify him, regard him as an Absolute and hence a 'man-god'. Dostoevsky believed that it was impossible to love man apart from God. He even makes

39. Berdyaev, Towards a New Epoch, p. 59.

40. Loc. cit.

41. Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, p. 39.

Ivan Karamazov declare that he cannot love his fellows. Outside of the Christian conception love becomes an illusion and a lie<sup>42</sup> it degenerates into arbitrary self-will and a sense of total self-sufficiency.<sup>43</sup> In Dostoevsky's characters, it manifests itself in depraved sensuality or intellectual nihilism, both of which have as their end result insanity or suicide. In Letters from the Underworld Dostoevsky underlines the marked contrast between the rational skepticism, with all its resultant contradictions, of the 'undergroundling' and the naïve pity and love of the prostitute, Lisa. It is he who is damned, she who is saved. Dostoevsky believed that only one's resolution "to do everything for the sake of active love...is obligatory and important."<sup>44</sup>

One must sacrifice, to the extent of giving everything and not even wishing that anything be given in return....How is this to be done? It is impossible to do it, but it must be done in and for itself, it must be in one's nature, unconsciously existing in the nature of the whole tribe. In a word, there ought to be a foundation of brotherly love--there ought to be love.<sup>45</sup>

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42. Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 131.

43. Ibid., p. 123.

44. Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, Vol. 2, p. 622.

45. Dostoevsky, Letters from the Underworld, pp. 86-7.



Dostoevsky advocates a unique type of Christian Socialism.<sup>46</sup>

Supreme freedom is not to hoard money and not to base one's security upon it, but 'to distribute one's property among all people and to go and serve everybody.' If a man is capable of this, if he is capable of overcoming himself to such an extent--isn't he free after that? This is the supreme manifestation of will-power!<sup>47</sup>

In The Brothers Karamazov Dostoevsky's most supreme ode to love is spoken by the saintly Father Zossima:

Brothers have no fear of men's sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things.... And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love<sup>48</sup>... God took seeds from different worlds and sowed them on this earth, and his garden grew up and everything came up that could come up, but what grows lives and is alive only through the feeling of its contact with other mysterious worlds. If that feeling grows weak and is destroyed in you, the heavenly growth will die away in you. Then you will be indifferent to life, and even grow to hate it.<sup>49</sup>

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46. Although he "denies the possibility of setting up heaven on earth without the aid of God, without the recognition that sin is a reality and not something which will disappear with the operation of an improved system of the production and distribution of commodities" (Rex Warner, The Cult of Power, John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1946, p. 83).

47. Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, p. 623.

48. Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, Modern Library, 1950, pp. 382-3.

49. Ibid., p. 385.

In his eloquent "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" Dostoevsky makes it abundantly clear that the only worthwhile alternative to a ruling elect which offers mankind miracle, mystery and authority is the incomparable anarchy of love.<sup>50</sup>

### Beauty

"Beauty," Dostoevsky said, "will save the world." It "is the Christianized cosmos in which chaos is overcome.... Beauty is the goal of all life, it is the deification of the world."<sup>51</sup> But this same beauty for Dostoevsky was at the same time terrible and mysterious. "It is here," he wrote, "that the devil strives with God, and the field of battle is the hearts of men."

How are we to understand this?... Externally harmonious beauty may be deceptive and false, it may screen ugliness. Beauty may pass over into its opposite, as may every other principle too, when it breaks away from the source of light. It may, therefore, be said with equal truth, that it is harmony and rest from painful struggle and that it may become a 'field of battle' between God and the devil.<sup>52</sup>

Dostoevsky's "traditional mysticism of love"<sup>53</sup> pervades all his works. In The Brothers Karamazov, through the

50. Ivan Roe, The Breath of Corruption, an Interpretation of Dostoevsky, Hutchison & Co. Ltd., 1950, p. 86.

51. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 333.

52. Nicolas Berdyaev, The Divine and the Human, Geoffrey Bles, 1949, p. 140.

53. Op. cit., p. 263.

personality of Ivan, the author writes:

I want to see with my own eyes the hind lie down with the lion and the victim rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there when everyone suddenly understands what it has all been for. All the religions of the world are built on this longing and I am a believer.<sup>54</sup>

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54. Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 289.

### CHAPTER III .

## Chapter III..

### The Impact of Dostoevsky on Berdyaev

1. Mysticism.
2. Messianism.
3. Humanism
  - (a) Its bankruptcy
  - (b) The twofold nature of progress.
4. Democracy.
5. Asceticism, atheism and nihilism.
6. Evil
  - (a) As non-being
  - (b) All things are not lawful.
7. Immortality.

## The Impact of Dostoevsky on Berdyaev

### Mysticism

The foundation and source of all creative movement, according to Berdyaev, is mysticism. It is that "knowledge which has its source in vital and immediate contact with the ultimate reality...derived from 'mystery'."<sup>1</sup> Berdyaev distinguishes between two kinds of mysticism. There is first the saintly mysticism of perfection or elevation of the soul to God and secondly the mysticism of penetration--a kind of second sight or insight into the supreme meaning of all things. Into this second category Berdyaev places Jacob Boehme, Baader, Soloyev, Leon Bloy and Dostoevsky.<sup>2</sup> The following citation from The Possessed would be for Berdyaev an instance of Dostoevsky's prophetic mysticism which has as its aim the divinization of man and the transfiguration of everything created.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 253.

2. Lampert, Evgeny, "Nicolas Berdyaev", Modern Christian Revolutionaries, ed. Attwater, Devin-Adair Co., 1947, p. 336.

3. Op. cit., pp. 254-5.

Every earthly woe and every earthly tear is a joy for us. And when you water the earth with your tears a foot deep, you will rejoice at everything at once, and your sorrow will be no more, such is the prophecy.

In such a passage Berdyaev would find "a transcendence of the created world"<sup>4</sup> in which the transcendental becomes spiritually immanent.<sup>5</sup>

### Messianism

Mysticism and Messianism are closely linked in Berdyaev's writings. He discovers four types of Messianism:<sup>6</sup> National or universal messianism, messianism of this world or the next, Victorious or suffering messianism and Personal or impersonal messianism. These four Messianisms converge to produce Christian Messianism which "not only postulates the existence of the transcendent, but also recognizes the possibility of changing our world by means of the transcendent."<sup>7</sup> Berdyaev regards Christianity as both

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4. Nicolas Berdyaev, Spirit and Reality, Geoffrey Bles, 1946, p. 119.

5. Ibid., p. 120. Professor Lavrin regards Dostoevsky as a transcendental or symbolic realist, as a visionary rather than a visual realist who sees in actuality only a veil of the inner reality. (Dostoevsky--A Study and Dostoevsky and His Creation, p. 33).

6. Berdyaev, The Divine and the Human, p. 175.

7. Ibid., p. 177.

Messianic and eschatological, "that is to say, dynamic and progressive in the spirutal or deepest sense of the word."<sup>8</sup> For Berdyaev, the Messianic idea gives meaning to history, especially to Russian history.<sup>9</sup>

Russia remained outside the great modern humanist movement; she has had no Renaissance.... She has never been able wholly to accept humanist culture, with its rationalist concepts, formal logic and law, neutrality in religion, and general secular compromise.... But the Russians took over the last fruits of European humanism at the moment of its decay, when it was destroying both itself and the divine image in man.<sup>10</sup> Russia, situated midway of East and West, in a terrible catastrophic way has taken on the most considerable significance of all nations: the eyes of the whole world are on her.<sup>11</sup>

In "The New Middle Ages"--the coming period of history and culture, Berdyaev reserves a special place for Russia because he feels she "looks to the future". She has remained relatively free of standardized "civilization" and as yet has been unwilling to sacrifice content for form.<sup>12</sup> Above all, like Dostoevsky, Berdyaev feels

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8. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 304.

9. Op. cit., p. 171.

10. Quoted in Lampert, Berdyaev, p. 363.

11. Ibid., pp. 364-5.

12. Loc. cit.



the Russian people are the most universalist.<sup>13</sup>

## Humanism

### (a) Its bankruptcy

Over and over again Berdyaev remarks that the creative powers and inner potentialities of the Renaissance are "played out", "exhausted", "used up" and "bankrupt".<sup>14</sup>

The Middle Ages with their asceticism, monasticism, and chivalry had economized human forces and thus allowed their creative flowering in the age of the Renaissance. Humanism, on the other hand, repudiated both ascetic discipline and submission to supernatural principles. It dissipated and exhausted human forces, and thus undermined the authority of human personality.... Once the personality has lost all idea and consciousness of itself, it seeks for a spiritual authority to restore its failing strength.... Humanist atheism leads to humanist self-repudiation, or anti-humanism, and that freedom becomes compulsion.<sup>15</sup>... Modern man, in pursuit of his aim to dominate the world has become its slave.<sup>16</sup>... (Russian thought with) its deep sense of anguish and suffering is in complete contrast to the spontaneous joy and exuberance of Renaissance humanism. Dostoevsky in particular penetrated to the very depths of European humanism. In his works the humanist ideal appears tragically bankrupt.<sup>17</sup>

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13. Cf. Dostoevsky's Pushkin speech in which he describes the task of coming generations in Russia to be that of uttering "the ultimate word of great universal harmony, of the brotherly accord of all nations abiding by the law of Christ's gospel." (Diary of a Writer, Vol. 2, p. 980).

14. Monroe C. Beardsley, "Berdyaev: Sibyl in Wasteland", The Russian Review, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 1943, p. 15.

15. Nicolas Berdyaev, The Meaning of History, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936, p. 180.

16. Ibid., p. 181.

17. Ibid., p. 184.

The dialectic of humanism, as Berdyaev traces it, is summed up by Lisaveta Prokofievna in Dostoevsky's The Idiot, in her words to the "lunatics" who aspire to love each other without loving God:<sup>18</sup> "You are so eaten up with pride and vanity that you'll end by eating up one another, that's what I prophesy."<sup>19</sup>

Berdyaev concludes that in the absence of belief in the humanity of God, man must needs become inhuman.<sup>20</sup>

"Man's self-affirmation leads to his perdition; the free play of human forces unconnected with any higher aim brings about the exhaustion of man's creative powers."<sup>21</sup>

Berdyaev sees in Dostoevsky a great Christian writer who denounced as the essential defect of Humanism its powerlessness to find a solution to the tragedy of human destiny.<sup>22</sup> Berdyaev's metaphysics of history may be summed up in his own words:

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18. Op. cit., p. 15.

19. Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Idiot, Modern Library, 1935, p. 270.

20. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. 180.

21. Berdyaev, Meaning of History, p. 142.

22. Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 39.

Man is the child of God and suffers a tragic destiny.... At the foundations of this destiny lies the original freedom with which God's child has been endowed and which is the true reflection and image of the creator.<sup>23</sup>

The source of man's "tragic destiny" is that he is endowed with freedom for evil as well as for good. In other words, "destiny depends on freedom".<sup>24</sup>

(b) The twofold nature of progress

Berdyayev is convinced that historical progress in human happiness is impossible. He perceives progress only "in the tragic sense of the inner principles of being, of the good-evil, divine-demonic antithesis, of the principles of good and evil in collaboration."<sup>25</sup> Ivan Karamazov is brought about to a repudiation of God because he saw history as a progression in human happiness--others were to suffer in order that this generation might bring about a new society. Progress, as Berdyayev interprets it, is twofold in nature; either

23. Op. cit., p. 77.

24. Ibid., p. 79. "Disciplined historical pessimism frees us from all earthly Utopias and illusions of a perfect social order.... It is not easy to overcome the radical evil of human nature and of the nature of the world, but the ultimate victory over evil is the transfiguration of the world--a 'new heaven' and a 'new earth'". (Berdyayev, Filosofia Neraventsva, p. 246).

25. Berdyayev, Meaning of History, p.192.

it is orientated

...to the resolving end, to the Kingdom of God, to the immanent and the transcendent, or it may be an endless process to which there can be no solution, which contains nothing of value in itself and in which everything is turned into a means.<sup>26</sup>

### Democracy

Berdyaev is particularly explicit in his denunciation of Democracy which he regards as Renaissance self-assertion in the political sphere.<sup>27</sup> Only a voluntary subjection of the will of the people to the will of God can overcome the disintegrating effects of individualistic autonomy with its alternative of tyrannical collectivism. Berdyaev would have the Kingdom of God as the goal not only of spiritual life, but also of political life. Shatov's accusation against liberalism<sup>28</sup> in The Possessed is mild compared

26. Berdyaev, The Divine and the Human, p. 179.

27. Spinka, Nicolas Berdyaev, p. 168.

28. Shatov accuses the liberals of offering nothing but "senility, a glorious mediocrity of the most bourgeois kind, contemptible shallowness, a jealous equality, equality without individual dignity, equality as it is understood by flunkies." (The Possessed, p. 589).

to Berdyaev's bitter polemic against Democracy .

Democrats talk a lot about liberty, but no respect for the human spirit and personality is entailed: it is a love of liberty expressed by people who are not interested in truth.... There was probably more real liberty of the spirit in the days when the fires of the Spanish Inquisition were blazing than in the middle class republics of to-day.<sup>29</sup>

Even Berdyaev's sense of humour was exposed to his anti-democratic bias . Both in his Autobiography and The End of Our Time he relates an anecdote attributed to Louis Blanc designed to expose the hypocrisy of bourgeois liberalism . A well-to-do Parisian approaches a cab-driver and asks, "Are you free?", to determine if the cab was engaged. "Yes," replied the cabbie . "Long live freedom," replied the prosperous citizen and passes on . Berdyaev's philosophy characteristically lacks a democratic spirit. It aspires rather toward a mystical form of aristocracy.<sup>30</sup> In his Autobiography<sup>31</sup> Berdyaev approves the statement of some critics that he speaks for the aristocratic meaning of socialism . His main critique of Democracy is that he finds in it a model of mankind's spiritual decline through the

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29. Quoted by Lampert, Nicolas Berdyaev, p. 374 .

30. Masaryk, The Spirit of Russia, Vol. 2, p. 527 .

31. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. xiv . Preface .

assertion of the will to power, organization and earthly happiness . For Berdyaev the higher spiritual life can come about only through asceticism and resignation.<sup>32</sup>

### Asceticism, Atheism and Nihilism

In religious asceticism it is possible to distinguish two main varieties. There is the asceticism of a Father Zossima, devotional in origin and altruistic in practice, and that asceticism which is escapist in origin and anti-humanist in practice, whose advocates "are so preoccupied with themselves, with their purity and salvation, that they come to hate humanity and have no compassion to waste on it."<sup>33</sup> An outgrowth of this type of mentality is nihilism, which Berdyaev describes as "Orthodox asceticism turned inside out, asceticism without Grace."<sup>34</sup> At the base of Russian nihilism lies the Orthodox rejection of the world--the idea that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Dostoevsky has left us such monumental nihilists as the anti-social and amoral Raskolnikov, the demented fanatic Kirillov and the moral psychopath Stavrogin. Under the category of

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32. Berdyaev, Meaning of History, p. 216.

33. Berdyaev, Spirit and Reality, p. 79.

34. Berdyaev, Russian Communism, p. 45.

"mild" nihilism the names of Dostoevsky, Leontiev, Solovyev, Tolstoy and Berdyaev would inescapably appear, especially if Dostoevsky were right when he wrote, "we are all nihilists." The "mild" nihilist Dostoevsky protested vehemently against those "extreme" nihilists who had fallen into atheism and anthrop-idolatry. Such extremists of the intelligentsia preached "a nihilistic religion of purely mundane wellbeing."<sup>35</sup> "A new religion is coming instead of the old one" shouts Verkhovensky in The Possessed. At the basis of this "new religion" is the ego--separated from God--and hence, for Dostoevsky, an ego conceived as naught.<sup>36</sup> Dostoevsky, as an enemy of nihilism, revolted against the Schilleresque idea of "the high and the beautiful".<sup>37</sup> And this very hatred for the conventional lie of civilization led the author to search for truth in the life of the people. "Only the people and their future spiritual power will convert our atheists who have torn themselves away from their native soil."<sup>38</sup>

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35. Masaryk, Spirit of Russia, Vol. 2, p. 487.

36. Ibid., p. 451.

37. Berdyaev considers this exposure of the "exalted lie" as one of the essentially Russian motifs. (The Russian Idea, p. 130).

38. Spoken by Father Zossima in The Brothers Karamazov.

## Evil

### (a) As non-being

Dostoevsky's greatest figure, the atheist Ivan Karamazov, could find no justification for the evil, injustice and suffering in the world. In his eloquent tale of the tears of a little child, Ivan, like other Russian atheists, shows that he considers suffering to be evil. To recognize God, therefore, would be an attempt to justify this evil.<sup>39</sup> In Freedom and the Spirit, Berdyaev makes an attempt to rationalize Ivan's plight:

The source of evil is not in God, but in the unfathomable irrationality of freedom<sup>40</sup>.. The cause of evil lies in a false and illusory self-affirmation and in spiritual pride which places the source of life not in God but in self, to the annihilation of human personality in so far as it bears the divine image.<sup>41</sup>

Evil was considered by Berdyaev to be "non-being", whereas Love he considered to be "the affirmation of life and being in everything and everybody."<sup>42</sup> The living experience of evil, the denunciation of its non-being can lead man to the highest good. Once he

39. Nicolas Berdyaev, El Cristianismo y el problema del Comunismo, Espasa-Calpe, 1944, p. 95.

40. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 165.

41. Ibid., p. 167.

42. Loc. cit.



has overcome the experience of evil he can more clearly perceive the fulness of truth and goodness.<sup>43</sup> Berdyaev points out that man is not enriched by evil itself, rather "he is enriched by that spiritual strength which is aroused in him for the overcoming of evil.... It is evil that puts man's freedom to the test."<sup>44</sup>

Freedom of spirit means freedom for evil, and not for good only; but freedom for evil results in self-will, and self-will leads to insurrection against the source of spiritual freedom.<sup>45</sup> After freedom has led through self-will to wrongdoing, punishment follows by an inner fatality, punishment which tracks man in the deepest part of his nature.<sup>46</sup>

Berdyaev supplies his answer to the tortured questionings of Ivan's "euclidian" mind<sup>47</sup> in one highly imaginative sentence.

If there is a divine meaning, if there is a redeemer, if earthly life is itself an atonement, if the definitive harmony of the world is in the kingdom of God and not in a worldly kingdom, then this world can be accepted and its history with all its numberless sufferings can be justified.<sup>48</sup>

43. Ibid., p. 185.

44. Berdyaev, Russian Idea, p. 124.

45. Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 144.

46. Ibid., p. 89.

47. "I have a Euclidian earthly mind, and how could I solve problems that are not of this world?... All such questions are utterly inappropriate for a mind created with an idea of only three dimensions." (Ivan in The Brothers Karamazov, p. 279.)

48. Op. cit., p. 157.

(b) All things are not lawful

In commenting on the Karamazovs' amoral creed "all things are lawful," Berdyaev writes:<sup>49</sup>

All things are not allowable because, as immanent experience proves, human nature is created in the image of God and every man has an absolute value in himself and as such. The spiritual nature of man forbids the arbitrary killing of the least and most harmful of men: it means the loss of one's essential humanity and the dissolution of personality; it is a crime that no 'idea' or 'higher end' can justify. Our neighbour is more precious than an abstract notion, any human life and person is worth more here and now than some future bettering of society. That is the Christian conception, and it is Dostoevsky's.

For Berdyaev, Dostoevsky was Russia's greatest metaphysician and anthropologist. His was an anthropology that treated man "as a self-contradictory tragic creature, in the highest degree unhappy, not only suffering but in love with suffering".<sup>50</sup> For Dostoevsky, suffering was not only profoundly inherent in man, but was the sole cause for the awakening of conscious thought. Suffering redeemed evil.<sup>51</sup>

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49. Ibid., p. 97.

50. Berdyaev, Russian Idea, p. 179.

51. Loc. cit.

If the world consisted wholly and solely of goodness and righteousness there would be no 'need' for God, for the world itself would be God. God is, because evil is. And that means that God is because freedom is.<sup>52</sup>

### Immortality

For Dostoevsky man must have the conviction that his soul is immortal, otherwise man's attachment to this planet would be abolished and the loss of any higher meaning to life would force him to suicide.<sup>53</sup>

"If there is no immortality, there can be no virtue, and if there is no virtue, everything is lawful."<sup>54</sup>

What do (our Russian boys) talk about in that momentary halt in the tavern? Of the eternal questions, of the existence of God and immortality. And those who do not believe in God talk of socialism or anarchism, of the transformation of all humanity on a new pattern, so that it all comes to the same, they're the same questions turned inside out.<sup>55</sup>

Yet the passionate concern of Ivan did not extend "to the sublime plane of immortality".<sup>56</sup> If Ivan had

52. Quoted by Lampert in Berdyayev, p. 349.

53. Lavrin, Dostoevsky and His Creation, p. 146.

54. Spoken by Ivan in The Brothers Karamazov.

55. Spoken by Ivan to Alyosha, p. 278.

56. Berdyayev, Meaning of History, p. 100.

only believed in immortality he could have looked soberly on terrestrial life, Berdyaev believed, and realized the impossibility of achieving any conclusive victory on this earth over "the dark irrational principle".<sup>57</sup> He would come to see that "sufferings, evil and imperfections are the inevitable lot of man".<sup>58</sup> For Berdyaev comes to the conclusion that:

If man is not a free, immortal, personal being he may do anything, he is responsible for nothing, he has no intrinsic value.... The life and destiny of the least of human beings has an absolute meaning in respect of eternity: his life and his destiny are everlasting. For that reason one may not do away with a single human creature and escape punishment; we must consider the divine image and likeness in every-one, from the most noble to the most despicable.<sup>59</sup>

This notion of the absolute worth of the individual lies at the heart of Dostoevsky's ethical teaching and is the basic theme in all Berdyaev's writings.

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57. Cf. The 'dark' forces of D. H. Lawrence--blood, sex, virility and violence.

58. Berdyaev, Meaning of History, p. 100.

59. Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 106.

## CHAPTER IV .

## Chapter IV.

### The Philosophy of Berdyaev

1. Philosophical Personalism.
2. The problem of Man.
3. The problem of Personality
  - (a) As seen by Berdyaev
  - (b) As seen by Dostoevsky.
4. The problem of Freedom.
5. Berdyaev's Metaphysic of freedom
  - (a) Materialistic and religious determinism
  - (b) Doctrine of the 'Ungrund'.
6. Freedom or Necessity.

## The Philosophy of Berdyaev

I saw in Dostoevsky, whom I had loved from childhood, the depth of the problem of personality and of personal destiny!... I saw the spirit of the Grand Inquisitor displayed both from the right and from the left, in authoritarian religion and statecraft as well as in authoritarian revolutionary socialism. The problem of man, the problem of freedom, the problem of creativeness came to be the fundamental problems of my philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

Berdyaev by no means follows his admired master in all details. He finds that Dostoevsky characteristically represents a typical Russian tendency to swing between the extreme of nihilistic skepticism and the extreme of apocalyptic faith--an all-or-nothing, either-or attitude which is inconsiderate to contemporary problems of culture and ethics.<sup>3</sup> Berdyaev, also, is far from

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1. Berdyaev, Slavery and Freedom, p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 16.

3. Berdyaev found this same tendency present in Dialectical Materialism. Although he accepted the social truths of Marxism, he reacted vigorously against the demands of 'orthodox' Marxists that philosophy, art, religion, etc., be interpreted in terms of economics. Because of this view, Berdyaev became known as an 'autonomist' and soon passed from being an exponent of idealism in philosophy to become a religious thinker.

sharing the novelist's faith in an earthly millenium which is to come "out of the East" through the faith of the Russian peasants.<sup>4</sup> Berdyaev correctly feels that contemporary events have rudely shattered Dostoevsky's dream.

### Philosophical Personalism

Paul Miliukov refers to Berdyaev's philosophy as "the philosophy of the liberated spirit".<sup>5</sup> The ethics of Berdyaev could be summarized in one sentence-- Man is redeemed from the law in order to create.<sup>6</sup> Compassion, freedom and creativeness are his ethical cornerstones.<sup>7</sup> Berdyaev discovers throughout the course of history the constant clash between two antithetical principles: "subject, spirit, prime reality, freedom, truth, justice, love, humanity, are all opposed to object, world, external causality, utility, adaptability, violence and power".<sup>8</sup> Dualism exists, not between soul and body

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4 . Walter Marshall Horton, Contemporary Continental Theology, Harper & Bros., 1938, p. 13.

5 . Paul Miliukov, Outlines of Russian Culture, Part I, University of Penn.Press, 1942, pp. 146-7.

6 . Clarke, Berdyaev, p. 133.

7 . Berdyaev, Destiny of Man, p. 192.

8 . Berdyaev, Spirit and Reality, p. 169.



as for Descartes , but between spirit and nature , freedom and necessity , subject and object , personality and society , the individual and the general.<sup>9</sup> In postulating his "tragic philosophy" Berdyaev is consistent in maintaining "the primacy of freedom over Being".<sup>10</sup> He believed that philosophy must at no time be abstracted from life and purely theoretical , it must be activist and endowed with a sense of creation . Philosophy must also be essentially anthropological since "its knowledge of being is derived from man."<sup>11</sup>

#### The Problem of Man

The problem of man as Berdyaev sees it , is the curse of isolation brought about through separation from God . Because he fell away from God , man's essential nature is distorted . Instead of a direct experience to reveal the life of the subject , of the "existential self" , man's distorted reason develops a way of understanding the world in an exteriorized objectified form . This interpretation is nature as opposed to spirit . It is something like the Platonic

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9 . Berdyaev , Slavery and Freedom , p. 31 .

10 . Nicolas Berdyaev , Solitude and Society , Charles Scribner's Sons , 1938 , p. 24 .

11 . Ibid. , p. 30 .

world of appearance, phenomena, and reflected reality. Berdyaev used the Greek word 'noumena' to describe the world perceived through spiritual rather than objectivized experience.<sup>12</sup>

When the old national religious conceptions were beginning to disintegrate, and the human spirit began to be tormented by the problem of man's individual destiny which had failed to fulfil itself within the limits of either the Old Testament or paganism, the Christian truth was revealed to man.<sup>13</sup>... Christianity affirms man's primordial nature, independence and, above all, his freedom from the baser elemental processes. This made possible the apprehension for the first time of both the human personality and its high inherent dignity. Thus the development of the human personality constitutes the peculiar achievement of the Christian period of history.<sup>14</sup>

Before the advent of the machine "an organic tie had existed between man and nature".<sup>15</sup> The machine stepped in and conquered "not only the natural elements for the benefit of man, but also, in the process, man himself".<sup>16</sup> Berdyaev views technology as a change in human existence from organic life to organization.<sup>17</sup>

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12. Lossky, Russian Philosophy, p. 237.

13. Berdyaev, Meaning of History, p. 102.

14. Ibid., p. 125.

15. Ibid., p. 152.

16. Loc. cit.

17. "The supremacy of technique and the machine is primarily a transition from organic to organized life, from growth to construction." (p.39 "Man and Machine" in The Bourgeois Mind and other Essays, Sheed & Ward Inc., 1934).

This technology has killed all that is "organic" in life and has instead placed human existence under the banner of "organization". Nevertheless, Berdyaev welcomes the process of technology and like Nicolas Fedorov before him, believes that the spirit can transform and revivify it, thereby opening the way to a new and integral life.<sup>18</sup> In The Meaning of the Creative Act Berdyaev, with genuine feeling, writes:<sup>19</sup>

It is strange to think that God could have created something small and insignificant as the crown of his creation. It is impious and blasphemous to have a low opinion of God's idea, and to hold it in contempt as despicable and of no account.

Throughout his works Berdyaev shows himself a Christian Humanist. In his Autobiography he wrote: "The idea of God is the greatest human idea,<sup>20</sup> and the idea of man is the greatest divine idea."<sup>21</sup> For Berdyaev that distinctive quality which constitutes man's relation

18. Lampert, Berdyaev, pp. 354-7.

19. Ibid., p. 342.

20. Cf. Ivan's remark to Alyosha: "And what's strange, what would be marvellous, is not that God should really exist; the marvel is that such an idea, the idea of the necessity of God, could enter the head of such a savage, vicious beast as man. So holy it is, so touching, so wise and so great a credit it does to man." (The Brothers Karamazov, p. 278).

21. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. 209.

and response to God is creativity.<sup>22</sup> Man's willingness to create is not an autonomous right, but rather his duty before God. Failure to take part in God's creative action Berdyaev regarded as disobedience and the equivalent to rebellion against God.<sup>23</sup>

What is of God in life is revealed in creative acts, in the creative life of the spirit, which penetrates even the life of nature.<sup>24</sup> The creative act always calls up the image of something different; it imagines something higher, better and more beautiful than this--than the 'given'. This evoking of the image of something different, something better and more beautiful, is a mysterious power in man.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Problem of Personality

##### (a) As seen by Berdyaev

Ivan Karamzov's tragic conflict between personality and "world harmony" is the fundamental theme of existential philosophy for, Berdyaev points out, it cannot be solved within the bounds of history.

History ought to come to a conclusion, because it turns human personality into a means to an end, because in it every living generation merely manures the soil for the benefit of the generation which follows, and for which the same fate awaits.<sup>26</sup>

22. Ibid., p. 207.

23. Lampert, Berdyaev, p. 342.

24. Berdyaev, Beginning and the End, p. 155.

25. Ibid., p. 174.

26. Ibid., p. 148.

Human personality is a value because it is the bearer of the divine principle in life, as God's idea and God's image, it is the centre of moral consciousness and of supreme value.<sup>27</sup> Berdyaev distinguishes carefully between individuality and personality. The individual is produced by the biological generic process, he is born and he dies. Individuality therefore is a naturalistic and biological category, while personality is a religious and spiritual one. It is not generated but created by God.<sup>28</sup> "If there is no such thing as personality there can be no place for love because love is always a relationship between personalities<sup>29</sup>. It is love which transforms the Ego into a personality." "Only love can effect that complete fusion with another being which transcends solitude."<sup>30</sup> It is "the intuition of personality".<sup>31</sup> Above all, personality is "a spiritual energy of qualitative originality, a spiritual activity which is the very centre of creative power".<sup>32</sup>

27. Berdyaev, Destiny of Man, p. 34.

28. "I want to build up a personalistic but certainly not an individualistic system of ethics." (Berdyaev, Destiny of Man, p. 55).

29. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 281.

30. Berdyaev, Solitude and Society, p. 120.

31. Ibid., p. 182.

32. Op. cit., p. 16.

## (b) As seen by Dostoevsky

There is one occasion, and one occasion only, when man can wilfully, consciously choose for himself what is foolish and harmful. This is the occasion when he yearns to have the right to choose for himself what is foolish and harmful, and to be bound by no obligation whatsoever to choose anything that is sensible. It is his crowning folly; it is wherein we see his ineradicable waywardness. Yet such folly may also be the best thing in the world for him, even though it work him harm, and contradict our soundest conclusions on the subject of interests. This is because it is possible for his folly to preserve to him, under all circumstances, the chief, the most valuable of all his possessions--namely, his personality, his individuality.<sup>33</sup>

Dostoevsky's attention is concentrated intensely on the human person, on the human personality.<sup>34</sup> He was bitter in his attacks upon the revolutionary movement of his time because he believed its morality was an affront to the dignity of the human personality.

Revolutionary morality does not recognize personality as the foundation of every moral estimate and judgment; it is wholly impersonal and denies all moral autonomy, admitting that it uses human persons as a means and material, that it allows the employment of any means that will forward the victory of the revolutionary thing. The revolution is by nature 'amoral', placing itself above any consideration of good and evil.... Man in revolt loses his autonomy: he comes under the power of an impersonal inhuman force. There lies the secret of the revolution, the inhumanity from

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33. Dostoevsky, Letters from the Underworld, p. 34.

34. Berdyaev, Towards a New Epoch, p. 59.

which arise dishonour, absence of private opinion, the tyranny of some and the subjection of others.<sup>35</sup> For with the revolutionary denial of personality there goes a complete break with our forefathers and the past, we are given a religion of killing in place of a religion of a rising from the dead.<sup>36</sup>

Writing once again on the subject of personality in his

Essay on the Bourgeoisie, Dostoevsky says:

To offer one's life for others, to suffer for others on the cross or at the stake, is possible only when there is a powerful development of the personality. A strongly-developed personality, conscious of its right to be such, having cast out fear, cannot use itself, cannot be used except in sacrifice for others, that these become like unto itself, self-determinate and happy. It is Nature's law and mankind tends to reach it.<sup>37</sup>

Berdyayev sees in Dostoevsky's dialectic about the tears of a child and the return of Ivan's admission ticket to world harmony, "a revolt against the idea of being as the realm of the universally 'common'".<sup>38</sup> Berdyayev finds eternal truth in this revolt. This idea that the particular, single personality is of infinitely greater value than the hypothetical world order and

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35. Berdyayev, Dostoevsky, p. 151.

36. Ibid., p. 153.

37. Quoted in André Gide, Dostoevsky, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1925, pp. 190-1.

harmony of the whole Berdyaev describes as Christian personalism.

Freedom of personality is a duty, it is a fulfillment of vocation, the realization of the divine idea of man, an answer to the divine call. Man ought to be free, he dare not be a slave, because he ought to be a man.<sup>39</sup>

### The Problem of Freedom

Berdyaev regarded Dostoevsky as "the most passionate and extreme defender of the freedom of man which the history of human thought has ever known."<sup>40</sup> Even the problem of suffering for Dostoevsky was solved entirely by freedom and in particular by Christ, who took upon Himself the suffering of the world.<sup>41</sup> However, Dostoevsky never hesitated in disclosing the fatal results of "empty freedom", of "human self-assertion" and of "godlessness".<sup>42</sup> It was freedom wrongly directed<sup>43</sup> that motivated the downfall of such self-made giants as Raskolnikov, Stavrogin, Kirillov and Ivan Karamazov.

39. Ibid., p. 48.

40. Berdyaev, Russian Idea, p. 89.

41. Ibid., p. 79.

42. Ibid., p. 90.

43. Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 77.



"Only the way of God-manhood and the God-man leads to the affirmation of man, to human personality and freedom."<sup>44</sup> This is what Berdyaev describes as the "existential dialectic"<sup>45</sup> of Dostoevsky. In The Brothers Karamazov Dostoevsky eloquently gives expression to his idea that freedom if it is based purely on self-will and self-affirmation must inevitably end in the negation of God, of man, of the world and even of freedom itself.<sup>46</sup>

I am perplexed by my own data and my conclusion is a direct contradiction of the original idea with which I start. Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism.<sup>47</sup>

The doctrines of such as Shigalev and the Grand Inquisitor are born of self-will and godlessness. "Freedom becomes self-will, self-will becomes compulsion. That is the process."<sup>48</sup> The solution of true equality and true liberty is to be found only in following the way of the "God-made-man",<sup>49</sup> in following the path of Christ. "Any

44. Op. cit., p. 90.

45. Loc. cit.

46. Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 82.

47. Spoken by Shigalev in The Possessed, (Part II, Chapter VII., i, i).

48. Op. cit., p. 82.

49. Ibid., p. 84.

idea of world-wide happiness and the common unity of mankind from which God is excluded means disaster for man and the loss of his freedom of spirit."<sup>50</sup> Dostoevsky is not so dramatic, but just as emphatic, when he writes, in The Landlady,<sup>51</sup> "Liberty is better than bread, and more beautiful even than the sun." It is not for "feeble souls."<sup>52</sup> In his Dream of a Ridiculous Man<sup>53</sup> Dostoevsky gives three possible alternatives to the question of world harmony. There is first that harmony without freedom or suffering--a state of blissful ignorance which results in nothing creative and original. There is secondly that harmony purchased at the price of numberless suffering built up through laws of iron necessity. This is the society of the ant-heap. However, there is always the possibility of that third and ultimate harmony which is arrived at through freedom and suffering--the Kingdom of God. Dostoevsky, particularly in his "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" advocated a peculiarly theocratic utopia in which the Church would swallow up the State and bring into effect a kingdom of freedom and love.

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50. Loc. cit.

51. Spoken by the ward Katherine in The Landlady, p. 230.

52. Spoken by old Murin in The Landlady, p. 302.

53. In Dostoevsky's Diary of a Writer.

## Berdyaev's Metaphysic of freedom

### (a) Materialistic and Religious determinism

Berdyaev discovered while attempting to formulate a philosophy that was both existential and Christian that materialistic and religious determinism were both equally hostile to personality. Materialism presents man with laws of natural necessity, with a blind fate. Religious determinism insists that all is God's will and man is but a puppet in the hands of God. Both forms of determinism are a negation of freedom and personality. To escape from this dilemma Berdyaev set up an elaborate metaphysic of freedom in order to show that freedom must exist parallel with God and even independent of Him.

### (b) Doctrine of the 'Ungrund'

From Jacob Boehme<sup>54</sup> he borrowed the doctrine of the 'Ungrund'. "The Ungrund must be understood above all as freedom...which has its roots in nothingness, in the meon...in...the Ungrund."<sup>55</sup>

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54. Berdyaev refers to Boehme as the founder of metaphysical voluntarism. "To Boehme, chaos is the root of nature, chaos, that is to say, freedom", (Berdyaev, Beginning and the End, pp. 107-9).

55. Loc.cit. This idea of the 'Ungrund' is in some respects related to Heidegger's ontology of 'Nothingness'.

'Ungrund' is the primal, irrational, dark and indetermined freedom. It is not itself evil, but makes evil possible<sup>56</sup>.. Since freedom derives from the Ungrund, God did not create freedom and is therefore in no sense responsible for its consequences.<sup>57</sup>

"My philosophical thinking," writes Berdyaev, "does not take a scientific form...it belongs intuitively to life. Spiritual experience lies at the very foundation of it, and its driving power is a passion for freedom."<sup>58</sup>

Berdyaev's passion for freedom has led him into a most elaborate rationalization as to its primordial existence.

The essence of the ego is freedom, and freedom is the beginning and the end of all philosophy<sup>59</sup>.. Freedom is not something which man demands of God, but that which God requires of man<sup>60</sup>.. It is the inner dynamic of the spirit, the irrational mystery of being, of life and of destiny.<sup>61</sup>

#### Freedom or Necessity

The interplay between freedom and necessity or the spiritual and the natural world takes place within the human soul, Berdyaev believes. "When the spiritual

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56. Quoted by Spinka in Berdyaev, p. 119.

57. Ibid., p. 120.

58. Berdyaev, Beginning and the End, Preface, p. v.

59. Ibid., p. 23.

60. Ibid., p. 216.

61. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 121.

is operative within the psychical, the freedom of the spirit is revealed; when it is the natural which is active, then necessity once more asserts its sway."<sup>62</sup> Berdyaev scorns the estrangement of the object from the subject; the absorption of the personal in the impersonal; the rule of necessity which crushes freedom; the increased levelling down to the lowest common denominator. He would replace these with communion in sympathy and love, voluntarism, personalism and creativeness.<sup>63</sup>

The objectivication of knowledge in aiming at the establishment of general-validity for the average normal mind of the majority of men has a limiting effect upon both knowledge and reality itself. It is bent upon crowding out everything which demands a great spiritual effort, and a sense of spiritual community. The average man, and human society especially, is always exercising violent pressure upon men. They find shelter from danger, they find self-preservation, in concepts and laws of logic in the field of cognition, in the laws of the State, in fossilized formulae of family life, of class, of the external life of the Church as a social institution. In these defensive measures, intuition, inspiration, love, humanity and living faith are crushed and stifled, the flame of the spirit is extinguished.<sup>64</sup>

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62. Ibid., p. 123.

63. Op. cit., p. 62.

64. Ibid., p. 80.

The individual is a part of society and subject to it, but personality is not. Rather Berdyaev sees society as itself a part of personality.<sup>65</sup> With a certain characteristic dogmatism he propounds his idea that the source of human freedom cannot be in society, but is in the spirit. "Everything which proceeds from society is enslaving; everything which issues from the spirit is liberating."<sup>66</sup> To counteract sentimentality, hypocrisy and all forms of "necessity" Berdyaev suggests that we substitute an

...heroic love of freedom which lays stress upon the value of every human creature and of every creature in general, which is filled to the full with compassion and sympathy but a stranger to false sentiment.<sup>67</sup>

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65. Berdyaev, Slavery and Freedom, p. 103.

66. Ibid., p. 106.

67. Ibid., p. 153.

## CHAPTER V.

## Chapter V.

### The Romantic Existentialism of Dostoevsky

1. Romanticism .
2. Disease and the "Double" .
3. Anguish as Existential .
4. Possibilities for an Age of Crisis .



## The Romantic Existentialism of Dostoevsky

### Romanticism

The philosophical speculation of Dostoevsky revolves around the problem of individual liberty and the menace of moral relativism with its accompanying anarchy and crime. Dostoevsky saw the crucial question in Europe "of the estrangement of the individual from society, the loneliness and isolation of modern man, as the problem of freedom".<sup>1</sup> With incomparable anguish, Dostoevsky attempted to resolve the problem that man faces when he attempts to be himself in a world of urgent mental and moral conflicts. His characters are like drowning men in danger of going under. Their whole existence is a desperately emphatic assertion of their right to be.

...Dostoevsky's interest begins from the moment that man sets himself up against the objective established order of the universe, cuts himself off from nature and his organic roots, and manifests his arbitrary will. When he has repudiated nature and the organized life he casts himself into the hell of the city and there treads his miserable path in expiation of his sin.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hauser, The Social History of Art, Vol.2, p. 846.

2. Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 46.

The Undergroundling, Raskolnikov, Kirillov, Ivan Karamazov--all battle against the danger of being submerged in an abyss of unrestricted freedom and egoism. They are impassioned, fearless, maniacal thinkers, tugging and wrestling with their ideas and visions for which they suffer and murder and die. For them life is a philosophical problem--thought, their one constant occupation, life's only content. In Dostoevsky's writings the power of thought to influence the emotions has almost the same force as the flood and stress of feelings had for the Romantics.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Dostoevsky's art could be described as a synthesis of intellectualism and romanticism.

#### Disease and the "Double"

Dostoevsky revealed many of the characteristics of Romanticism in his attitude toward disease and in the use of his literary mechanism "the double". In his writings Dostoevsky showed that he had a strongly Romantic concern for his "sacred" disease--epilepsy. For him, it represented something extraordinary, something unique, abnormal and irrational. Immediately preceding an attack it treated him to sublime contentment and affirmation of life, only to expose him the

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3. Op. cit., pp. 855-6.

next moment to intense suffering, a feeling of guilt and the will to die. This strong consciousness of disease influenced and dominated his whole conception of life. Anticipating the findings of Freud, Adler and Jung, Dostoevsky pioneered in the murky field of psychoanalysis. He discovered the source of wish-fulfilment dreams, the source of irrationality--the subconscious. Here he found that two souls could dwell within the same breast--both a demon and a judge. "The double" is a development of the painfully introspective underworld man whose second self becomes what he would like it to be<sup>4</sup>, in other words--his sublimated ego. Dostoevsky's work abounds with this essentially Romantic device of "the double", possibly the influence, as E. J. Simmons suggests, of the fantastic tales of E.T.A. Hoffman. Berdyaev is greatly impressed by the inward division of man that Dostoevsky so remarkably shows in his "doubles". "We are not aware," he writes, "that we live in madness which is but superficially concealed. Human consciousness lies between two abysses, the upper and the lower, the superconscious and the subconscious."<sup>5</sup>

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4. Gide, Dostoevsky, p. 117.

5. Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, p. 77

## Anguish as Existential

The great liberal critic of German romanticism, Arnold Ruge, writes that: "Romanticism is rooted in the torment of the world and so one will find a people the more romantic and elegiac, the more unhappy its condition is."<sup>6</sup> Just as melancholy is to the Romantic, so is anguish to the Existentialist. Melancholy makes the Romantic, anguish makes the Existentialist.<sup>7</sup> In the creations of Dostoevsky, however, there is the feeling of anguish rather than melancholy. By this criterion Dostoevsky is beyond doubt not a Romanticist. Sartre and Berdyaev<sup>8</sup> unequivocally classify him as an existentialist. Sartre distinguishes two classifications for man's moral attitudes. He opposes anguish to seriousness. As Bobbio writes:<sup>9</sup>

This opposition is far more than the opposition of two states of mind. It is the opposition of two ethical codes--the existentialist ethic of freedom and the materialistic ethic of determination.

By Sartre's terminology, therefore, the "serious" man is not free but determined. Thus Dostoevsky, the apostle of freedom, could never be classified as a

6. Quoted in Hauser, Social History of Art, p. 663.

7. Norberto Bobbio, The Philosophy of Dualism, (tr. by David Moore), Basil Blackwell, 1948, p. 58.

8. "The greatest Russian metaphysician and the most existential was Dostoevsky" (Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, p. 159).

9. Op. Cit., p. 58.

"serious" man. Of particular appeal to Sartre is Dostoevsky's deep awareness of complicity in the world's guilt. Each man, according to Father Zossima, is accountable for the sins of all men. Such a position, contrary to that of the Grand Inquisitor's, "throws moral responsibility back on man, with a vengeance."<sup>10</sup> It is precisely this aspect of the equal blame of all men that Sartre reëchoes in his philosophy.

#### Possibilities for an Age of Crisis

"Unamuno once said," writes Berdyaev, "that Spanish philosophy is contained in Don Quixote. In the same way we can say that Russian philosophy is contained in Dostoevsky."<sup>11</sup> Dostoevsky sees three possibilities<sup>12</sup> open to this age of crisis: one of man's alternatives is to get over the idea of God and create a social tower of Babel, a second alternative is one of decadence --the era of the superman or the man-God represented in fiction by Kirillov and in real life by Nietzsche, the third and Dostoevsky's own choice is the religious alternative of a second coming and a voluntary end of all. This apocalyptic, either-or attitude of Dostoevsky is inimical to Berdyaev and to most of the novelist's greatest admirers.

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10. Helen Muchnic, An Introduction to Russian Literature, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1947, p. 170.

11. Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, p. 159.

12. Merejkowski, Tolstoi as Man and Artist, p. 297.

Yet, as E. H. Carr writes:<sup>13</sup>

The belief of Dostoevsky in the irrationality both of the world of phenomena and of human nature was balanced by his belief in a rational, or at any rate a moral force somewhere controlling the universe. The latter belief was, both actually and logically, the sequel to the former. His conviction of the necessity of faith in God issued from his conviction of the irrationality of mankind.

The modern world has been quick to accept Dostoevsky's premise of irrationality but not, and with tragic consequences, his conclusion of a rational, moral force.

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13. E. H. Carr, Dostoevsky, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931, p. 322.

## CHAPTER VI.

## Chapter VI.

### The Existentialists

1. Religious and Aesthetic Existentialism.
2. The Religious Existentialism of Søren Kierkegaard.
3. Transcendence and Ontology.
4. The Aesthetic Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre.
5. Berdyaev's Affirmation of Religious Existentialism.



## Chapter VI.

### The Existentialists

Modern Existentialism as is represented by Heidegger and Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Sartre and Albert Camus has its roots firmly in the Nineteenth Century--in Kierkegaard, the lonely Dane, Dostoevsky, the suffering Russian and Nietzsche, the Teutonic superman. Yet as far back as the Seventeenth Century a melancholy mathematician, Pascal, had given expression to the mood that was to inflict all later existentialists.

It does not need a very elevated soul to understand that we have no true and solid satisfaction, that all our pleasures are but vanity, that our ills are infinite, and that at last death, which menaces us at every instant, shall in a few years infallibly put us in the horrible necessity of being either eternally annihilated or eternally miserable. There is nothing surer than that, nothing more terrible--play the brave as we will, there is the end which awaits the finest life in the world.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Hector Hawton, The Feast of Unreason, Watts & Co., 1952, quoted p. 52.

## Religious and Aesthetic Existentialism

The only traits commonly shared by all existentialists are an awareness of life's tragedy and a sense of extreme anxiety. Religious existentialists, such as Marcel and Kierkegaard, believe that man is created in the divine image. Although man is greatly isolated from God, he need not end in despair if he has faith in God's ultimate victory. Existentialists, without exception, stress life's pathos as experienced through unrelieved dread and despair<sup>2</sup> or the burning desire to share in God's infinity. The main difference between religious existentialism and aesthetic<sup>3</sup> existentialism can be seen in Sartre's idea

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2. "Choose Despair," writes Kierkegaard, "the more the suffering, the more the religious existence --and the suffering persists." (*Ibid.*, p. 70). For religious man suffering was an essential, whereas for aesthetic and ethical man--the two lower stages of religious man, suffering was accidental.

3. William Hubben, Four Prophets of our Destiny, Macmillan Co., 1952, pp. 30-3.

of the "free" man. For Sartre, man is "condemned to be free".<sup>4</sup> For Kierkegaard, as for Berdyaev, man is ennobled through God's grace to live in freedom.

#### The Religious Existentialism of Søren Kierkegaard

Existentialism is to a great extent a reaction against the speculative idealism of Hegel--a reaction which encourages "an awakening to acceptance in individual isolation of the necessity of freedom".<sup>5</sup> Kierkegaard emphatically opposed the pursuit of objectivity and the passion for totality which he found in Hegel<sup>6</sup> and substituted the notion that truth lay in subjectivity and that true existence can be achieved only through intensity of feeling.

...The true is not higher than the good and the beautiful but the true and the good and the beautiful belong essentially to every human existence, and are unified for an existing individual, not in thought but in existence.

For Kierkegaard the existent individual is in an infinite relationship with himself and has an infinite

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4. Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Être et le Néant, Librairie Gallimard, 1943, p. 515.

5. H.J. Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1951, p. 162.

6. Jean Wahl, A Short History of Existentialism, Philosophical Library, 1949, pp. 3-4.

7. Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, (tr. by Walter Lowrie), Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 311.

interest in himself and his destiny. He feels himself always to be in Becoming. For instance, one is not a Christian, but becomes a Christian through continued and sustained effort. Above all, the existent individual is impassioned and inspired by a "passion for freedom"<sup>8</sup>. Since existential thinking is concerned with "the reality of personal existence"<sup>9</sup>, it is, therefore not objective but highly subjective. It is thinking that is profoundly personal--"inwards" thinking. Existential thinking is not dispassionate as philosophy would require--rather it is extremely passionate. "Passion is the real thing, the real measure of man's powers"<sup>10</sup>. Since "passion and feeling are open to all men in an equal degree"<sup>11</sup> this forms the basis of an existential universalism--the unifying factor of which is not reason but feeling. In his writings Kierkegaard

8. Op. cit., p. 4.

9. Channing-Pearce, "Kierkegaard" in Modern Christian Revolutionaries, p. 26.

10. Kierkegaard, Journals, (ed. and trans. by Alexander Dru), O. U. P., 1938, p. 396.

11. Loc. cit.

shows himself as strongly anti-intellectualist: "the intelligence and all that goes with it has done away with Christianity...the fight is against intelligence."<sup>12</sup> Yet he does not suggest that reason is a trivial means to his absolute goal of eternity: "the race must go through reason to the absolute".<sup>13</sup> Passion, which he idealizes, is caused by the clash of contraries in life, by the "tension of life"--feeling which is opposed by the intellect--the realm of freedom versus the realm of necessity. This is the paradox. All reasoning which attempts to smooth out this paradox Kierkegaard contemptuously dismisses as both unrealistic and arrogant. The conscious man, he considers a "synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity."<sup>14</sup> Philosophers who followed the tradition of Descartes sought to be detached observers of life. Kierkegaard desperately wished to refute this concept of the philosopher who found himself "above the battle" and dubbed himself a "Christian thinker" rather than a philosopher. The

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12. Ibid., p. 925.

13. Ibid., p. 1256.

14. Op. cit. p. 39.

very basis of the Christian faith for Kierkegaard was its "leap" beyond reason into the realm of faith in the "absurd".<sup>15</sup> Belief alone could comprehend the absolute paradox of Christ as both God and Man. In The Brothers Karamazov Father Zossima suggests to the doubting woman that the reality of God would be revealed to her the more she practised Christian love. Dostoevsky, like Kierkegaard, interprets Christianity as an existential faith--something to be lived, not intellectualized. With his strong emphasis on "inwardness" Kierkegaard tremendously extended man's consciousness of the subconscious regions of the human psyche. A century later, the "inwardness", which Kierkegaard was practically alone in exploring has been treated more and more--by Freud in psychology, by Dostoevsky in literature, and by Berdyaev and Sartre in philosophy.

#### Transcendence and Ontology

Be it the despair of Kierkegaard or the derision of Nietzsche,<sup>16</sup>

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15. Ibid., p. 61.

16. Bobbio, The Philosophy of Decadentism, p. 6.

All existentialists, whether admitting the religious solution or not, make allowance for some sort of movement of transcending or seeking beyond the immanent structure of human nature.<sup>17</sup>

Contemporary existentialists hesitate whether to view transcendence as a relation to a transcendent God as is the case with Kierkegaard or as a restless search after a foundation within the world as is the case with Nietzsche.<sup>18</sup> In criticism of Nietzsche's philosophical nihilism, Karl Jaspers asks: "How shall one interpret the ultimate frustration which being-oneself<sup>19</sup> encounters in the world?" "The option lies," he suggests, "between despair, life in the world is not really possible, and the treatment of frustration as revealing the hidden secret of the world, and this option is only kept open by the possibility of faith in Transcendence...."<sup>20</sup> Faith comes from choice which has

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17. James Collins, The Existentialists, Henry Regnery Co., 1952, p. 10.

18. Ibid., p. 24.

19. Karl Jaspers regards himself as an existentialist philosopher who is concerned with the three aspects of being. Briefly described--(1) Being-there is the empirical world; (2) Being-oneself is the thinker in transcendence; and (3) Being-in-itself is the world in transcendence.

20. Quoted in Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers, p.62.

its roots in being, since there is "no choice without decision, no decision without will, no will without duty, no duty without being."<sup>21</sup> Only in man does existence precede essence--because he alone is free. "All other beings are pre-determined."<sup>22</sup> It is only after he has made his choice that we know what he has indeed chosen, and what the choice has made him, that is, his essence.<sup>23</sup> In other words, man decides his own essence, man chooses himself. A knowledge of essence may be derived in objectivity, but only in subjectivity may we know existence, never in objectivity. Berdyaev finds this idea present in Kierkegaard but totally absent in the ontology formulated by Heidegger and Sartre. "Why is an ontology impossible?" asks Berdyaev;<sup>24</sup> "because it is always a knowledge objectifying existence."

In an ontology the idea of Being is objectified, and an objectification is already an existence which is alienated in the objectification. So that in ontology--in every ontology--existence vanishes. There is no more existence because existence cannot be objectified.<sup>25</sup>

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21. Ibid., p. 50.

22. Paul Foulquié, Existentialism, Denis Dobson Ltd., 1948, p. 51.

23. Ibid., p. 52.

24. Quoted in Wahl, Existentialism, p. 36.

25. Ibid., pp. 36-7.



For Heidegger the chief character of human existence is care and anxiety which ends in physical death. Heidegger's is a philosophy of despair and absolute pessimism--human life is only a preparation for death which ends existence. In Heidegger's system, man's personality is almost totally blotted out. "Worry turns out to be more significant than the man who worries. Man is constructed out of worries, just as human existence is built up from death."<sup>26</sup>

#### The Aesthetic Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre

Heidegger's philosophy paves the way for Sartre's startling pronouncement "Man is not a substance that thinks, but a separation from all substance: I am not, therefore I think."<sup>27</sup> Kierkegaard reversed the Cartesian dictum to read, "I am, therefore I think." Sartre's postulate negates not only the Cartesian tradition but that of Kierkegaard as well. L'Être et le Néant, Sartre's essay on "phenomenological ontology", ends with the remark, "man is a useless

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26. Nicolas Berdyaev, The Fate of Man in the Modern World, (tr. by Donald Lowrie), S.C.M. Press, 1935, p. 31.

27. Quoted in Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers, p.113.

passion."<sup>28</sup> In Sartre's system man cannot be regarded in any other way, since human nature is supposedly constituted by a futile and yet irresistible longing to be God. "The dynamic ideal of all human striving is to realize a state of being that is intrinsically contradictory and incapable of realization."<sup>29</sup> It is Sartre's claim that he is embracing the challenge offered by Dostoevsky<sup>30</sup>--if there be no God, then all things are lawful. For Sartre, man's denial of God is the prime step towards his development. Sartre bases his postulatory atheism on the assumption that only after the idea of God has been abandoned will man really become free. However, Sartre's freedom is morally anarchic--he is tragically doomed to be free. He must choose what to do but will never know whether his choice was right. Man can never be defined as long as he lives because "he is his life and nothing else."<sup>31</sup> Life, for Sartre, has no pattern, no meaning, no purpose --it is barren and all that remains is despair, anxiety and loneliness.

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28. Sartre, L'Être et le Néant, p. 708.

29. Collins, Existentialists, p. 71.

30.. Ibid., p. 72.

31. Quoted in Hubben, Four Prophets, p. 24.

## Berdyayev's affirmation of Religious Existentialism

The atheism of Heidegger and the existentialism of Sartre would probably be regarded by Kierkegaard as expressions of excessive aestheticism--for Kierkegaard the very lowest form of spiritual life.<sup>32</sup> Berdyayev emphatically removes himself from the company of Heidegger and Sartre, tracing his existential ancestry through Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, Pascal and Boehme.<sup>33</sup> In 1934 he noted that "the melancholy and tragic Kierkegaard is now exerting on modern philosophy an influence toward an ontology of nihilism which is not found in Kierkegaard himself."<sup>34</sup>

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32. In his work, Either-Or, Kierkegaard distinguished three stages of man's evolving spiritual life--the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious stages.

33. Jacob Boehme, the German mystic of the late Sixteenth Century, had a great influence on Berdyayev and as Lampert says, "was the cause of considerable ambiguities in his Christian philosophy" (Lampert, "Berdyayev", Modern Christian Revolutionaries, p. 317). The Doctrine of Sophia which Berdyayev accepts in part is summarized briefly by him as follows: "Boehme's doctrine of Sophia is a doctrine of eternal virginity and not of eternal femininity. Sophia is virginity, the completeness of man, the androgynous image of man. It was man's fall into sin which was his loss of his virgin--Sophia. After the Fall Sophia flew away to heaven and upon earth Eve appeared. Man yearned for his virgin--Sophia, for integrality. Sex is a sign of dividedness and fall" (Berdyayev, The Russian Idea, pp. 175-6).

34. Berdyayev, Fate of Man in the Modern World, p. 31.

## CHAPTER VII.

## Chapter VII .

### Berdyaev and Existentialism

1. Berdyaev's Existentialism .
2. A Philosophy of Crisis .

## Berdyaev and Existentialism

### Berdyaev's Existentialism

The basic principle of Berdyaev's existentialism is that of the primacy of personality of the existent subject. Being is regarded as secondary because it is a product of thought--an ontological object, a rationalized concept. Understanding, for Berdyaev, is integral<sup>1</sup>--not merely intellectual, conceptual or rationalistic. Here Berdyaev emphatically follows the tradition of Khomyakov and Solovyev. For Descartes it was the intellect, for Berdyaev it is the whole personality in its human predicament that is dominant and decisive. Where Descartes naturally tended toward rationalism and intellectualism, Berdyaev tends toward vitalism and intuition.

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1. Spinka, Berdyaev, p. 102.

A philosopher of the existentialist type does not proceed in the experience of knowing by means of objectification, does not place the object against the subject. His philosophy is the expression of the subject itself as it is engrossed in the secret of being.<sup>2</sup>

Since, Berdyaev states, man lives both in the phenomenal world and in the noumenal<sup>3</sup>, he is a divided being and hence a suffering being. For Berdyaev the very existence of personality represents a paradox, since "the personality is the incarnated antinomy of the individual, and the social, of form and matter, of the infinite and the finite, of freedom and destiny."<sup>4</sup> Berdyaev insists that the existence of personality is ever accompanied by yearning, since "yearning always indicates something lacking and movement towards the fulness of life."<sup>5</sup>

#### A Philosophy of Crisis

The peculiarity of existentialism is that it deals almost exclusively with the problem of man's

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2. Berdyaev, Autobiography, p. 297.

3. Berdyaev, Beginning and the End, p. 81.

4. Berdyaev, Solitude and Society, p. 174.

5. Berdyaev, Slavery and Freedom, p. 53.

separation from himself and from the world. It does not attempt to solve the problem by some universal rationalization, but rather enlarges and expands upon the separation itself. Separation becomes the primordial stuff of personal existence. The philosophy of existentialism does not attempt so much to answer the questions raised, as it does to restate the questions emphatically "until they engage the whole man and are made personal, urgent and anguished."<sup>6</sup>

That these questions cannot be given definite, objective, universal answers is not so much man's lack of knowledge but because man, as being, remains a paradox, a question, a personal choice. Man and the objective world "both are at any time other than and more than, anything that can be said of them."<sup>7</sup> Existentialism represents a kind of stalemate in philosophy. It is a philosophy of crisis<sup>8</sup> and is symptomatic of a crisis in philosophy.

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6. Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers, p. 152.

7. Loc. cit.

8. Bobbio, Philosophy of Decadentism, p. 6.



Man to-day lives in fear: his life is as it were suspended over an abyss and he is threatened on all sides. He has lost the hopes which so recently he tried to substitute for the Christian faith. He no longer believes in progress, in humanism, in science, in salvation to be brought by democracy and democratic civilization; he knows the injustice of capitalism, and has become disillusioned about the utopias of ideal social orders; he is eaten away by cultural and spiritual scepticism.<sup>9</sup>

In the words of Berdyaev, "we can see all things naked and undeceiving."

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9. Lampert, "Berdyaev", Modern Christian Revolutionaries, p. 352.

## CONCLUSION

## Conclusion

In Berdyaev, more than in any other writer and philosopher, can be seen the intellectual application of Dostoevsky's philosophy--in part rejected, but mostly accepted and reinterpreted for a new generation.

In an age where liberalism, humanism and rationalism seem to be increasingly neglected and despised, Berdyaev's emphasis on Dostoevsky's irrationalism and 'the will' is perhaps only too well-known and too well tried. It was not by chance that the psychopathic Dr. Goebbels marvelled at what a nation could do that lived out Dostoevsky's novels instead of just reading them. What an insult to an artist and what a denigration of genius! But then the greater the genius the more abuse received from later generations. Dostoevsky never preached a

gospel of nihilism. He depicted its state of mind, objectivized the subjective in man, and rationalized the irrational. Inescapably, at the bottom of all his thinking is love. It is inseparable from his work-- it floods the pages. The fanatics of intolerance and bigotry embrace everything which is negative in Dostoevsky and unconditionally reject all that is positive.

This state of mind was not Berdyaev's and, if only for this reason, admirers of Dostoevsky can ever be grateful to him.

## CHRONOLOGY

### Chronological List of Berdyaev's Writings

- 1900 F. A. Lange and the Critical Philosophy .
- 1901 Subjectivism and Individualism in Social Philosophy .
- 1907 The New Religious Consciousness and Society .  
Sub Specie Aeternitas .
- 1910 The Spiritual Crisis of the Intelligentsia .
- 1911 The Philosophy of Freedom .
- 1912 A. S. Khomyakov .
- 1915 The Soul of Russia .
- 1916 The Fate of Russia .  
The Meaning of the Creative Act .
- 1923 The Meaning of History .  
The Philosophy of Inequality .  
Dostoevsky .
- 1924 The End of Our Time .
- 1926 K. Leontiev .  
Freedom and the Spirit .
- 1931 The Destiny of Man .  
The Russian Revolution .  
Christianity and Class War .
- 1933 The Bourgeois Mind and other essays .
- 1934 The Fate of Man in the Modern World .  
Solitude and Society .

- 1937 Spirit and Reality.
- The Origin of Russian Communism.
- 1940 Slavery and Freedom.
- 1946 The Russian Idea .
- 1947 The Divine and the Human .
- Creation and Objectivization .
- Towards a New Epoch. )
- 1949 Dream and Reality. )
- 1950 Truth and Revelation. ) Published posthumously
- 1952 The Beginning and the End. )

## Chronological List of Dostoevsky's Writings

- 1846    Poor Folk.  
         Goliadkin (The Double).  
         Mr. Prochartschin.
- 1847    A Novel in Nine Letters.  
         The Landlady.
- 1848    The Stranger-Woman.  
         A Weak Heart (A Faint Heart).  
         Christmas and Wedding.  
         White Nights.  
         A Jealous Husband (Another Man's Wife).
- 1849    Netochka Nesvanova.
- 1858    The Little Hero.
- 1859    Uncle's Dream.  
         Stepanchikovo.
- 1861    The Insulted and Injured.  
         The House of the Dead.  
         A Silly Story.
1863.   Winter Notes on Summer Impressions.
- 1864    Letters from the Underworld.
- 1865    An Unusual Happening (An Unpleasant Predicament).  
         Crime and Punishment.
- 1866    The Gambler.



- 1868    The Idiot.
- 1870    The Eternal Husband.
- 1871    The Possessed.
- 1873    Diary of a Writer (Chapters 1 - 16).
- 1875    A Raw Youth (Adolescent).
- 1876    Diary of a Writer.
- 1877    The Little Girls.
- 1879    The Brothers Karamazov.
- 1880    The Speech on Pushkin.

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