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Grzegorz Przebinda

From Chaadayev to Solovyov

Russian Modern Thinkers Between East and West

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The book on the history of Russian philosophical thought of the nineteenth century deals with six important representatives in the sharply present context of the ideological dispute between East and West. The author has chosen for analysis such Russian concrete worldviews which either advocated dialogue between Russia and the West, or particularly sharply proclaimed the conflict between them. Agreement should be made either in the name of universal-humanist Christian principles, with a special emphasis on Catholicism, or in the name of Enlightenment principles. None of these thinkers are popular in Putin's Russia today, unlike Dostoevsky and Leontiev, the prophets of the fundamental conflict between Russia and Europe, also discussed in this work.

The Editors

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Introduction: Russian Ideas and Russian Troops

Russian philosophical thought of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, so closely related to the spiritual culture and history of not only Russia but also Central and Western Europe, has been the subject of my research and intellectual explorations since the early 1980s.[1] In June 1983, I graduated from the Jagiellonian University in Russian Philology, having experienced an intellectually fruitful time, and having prepared my MA thesis, entitled "Aleksander Sołżenicyn: pisarz i myśliciel wobec tradycji słowianofilstwa rosyjskiego" ("Alexandr Solzhenitsyn: Writer and Thinker on the Tradition of Russian Slavophilism"), under the supervision of Professor Ryszard Łużny (1927–1998). The martial law was underway in communist Poland then, imposed on 13 December 1981 by General Wojciech Jaruzelski (1923–2014), and the name "Solzhenitsyn" was completely forbidden by censorship. Thus, when two years later, I made my debut in the *Znak* Catholic monthly in Krakow with the article "Włodzimierz Sołowjow i idea teokracji ekumenicznej" ("Vladimir Solovyov and the Idea of Ecumenical Theocracy") the communist censorship removed even the brief com-ment I made at the end of the text on the intellectual tradition of Solovyov – as a sreligious thinker – being continued at the end of the twentieth century by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008).

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1 The present introduction has an identical title with my 2004 essay on the book by Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997) *Russian Thinkers* – a collection of excellent essays, including those on Aleksander Herzen, Vissarion Belinsky, Ivan Turgenev, and Leo Tolstoy that was published in Polish in 2003. See Grzegorz Przebinda. "Rosyjskie idee i wojska: Myśl rosyjska z perspektywy Isaiaha Berlina," *Tygodnik Powszechny: Książki w Tygodniku*, Cracow, No. 16 (2858), 18 April 2004, pp. 9–10. See also Ghzegozh Pshebinda. "Russkiye idei i voyska: Russkaya mysl' v ponimanii Isayi Berlina," *Novya Pol'sha*, Warsaw, No. 7–8 (55), 2004, pp. 98–101. After Isaiah Berlin, I associated that nineteenth-century clash of the "Russian idea" with cannons with the Russia of Tsar Nicholas I (1825–1855). In 1849, that ruler sent a 200,000-strong army to revolutionary Hungary, suppressing their armed uprising against Habsburg Austria. In the spring of 2022, in the face of the criminal attack by Putin's Russia on neighboring Ukraine, the phrase of the title unfortunately becomes even more sinister and topical. All the more so because the present ruler of the Kremlin in his ideological speeches refers not only to the history of Russian-Ukrainian-Polish relations, but also – as will be discussed later – to selected portions of modern Russian philosophical thought.

Undoubtedly, the greatest expert on the intellectual tradition of Russian Slavophilism was the Polish researcher Andrzej Walicki (1932–2020), the author of the great synthesis *W kręgu konserwatywnej utopii: Struktura i przemiany rosyjskiego słowianofilstwa* (*The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*), published in Polish in 1964 (2nd edition – in 2002), in English in 1973 (2nd edition – in 1989), and in 2019 also in Russian. I must admit that it was precisely this fundamental work, which I used profusely in writing my early critical treatise on the conservative utopia of Sol-zhenitsyn, that at the same time prevented me from researching the Slavophilic doctrine separately, as I simply considered the topic to be exhausted. Notably, many historians of Russian philosophy, both in the West and in the East, were of the same opinion, with the exception of Russia itself. Therefore, in my later synthetic study *Od Czaadajewa do Bierdiajewa. Spór o Boga i człowieka w rosyjskiej myśli filozoficznej, 1832– 1922* (*From Chaadayev to Berdyaev. The Dispute over God and Man in Russian Philosophical Thought, 1832–1922* [1998]), the two main Slavophiles – Ivan Kireyevsky (1806–1856) and Alexei Khomyakov (1806– 1860) – were mentioned only as part of the broader background of the dispute specified in the title. The second reason for their absence was that the aim of that already extensive work was, above all, to present the religious trend in Russian thought which was friendly to Europe and the entire Western world in general. In the case of Peter Chaadayev (1794–1856) and Nikolai Berdyaev (1876– 1948), it was primarily Catholic Europe, and in the case of Vladimir Solovyov (1853– 1900) – first Catholic Europe and then, at the end of his life, also the Europe of the Enlightenment and beyond.

The present volume, entitled *From Chaadayev to Solovyov: Russian Modern Thinkers between East and West*, differs from the one from 1998 not only in the choice of protagonists. It should be noted, of course, that both the Marxist Georgy Plekhanov (1856–1918) and the young Nikolai Berdyaev, who balanced between the "philosophy of creativity" and the "new Middle Ages," dropped out of my study due to their minor importance for its central problem. In contrast, it seemed purposeful this time to refer to the works of two thinkers absent in the old book – Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–1881) and Konstantin Leontiev (1831–1891). After all, both of them – despite sharp ideological disputes between them, and a critical attitude to Slavophilism, especially of Leontiev – were continuators of the archaic Slavophilic thought and they condemned modern Europe to inevitable extermination as an oasis of secularism, atheism and – what they believed to be – total moral corruption.

Dostoyevsky's religious thought – reflected both on the pages of his great novels in the years 1860–1881 and in the monthly magazine *Writer's Diary*, which

he published intermittently in the period 1873–1881 – ruled out in principle any agreement between Orthodox Russia and Europe, regardless of whether it was a Catholic, socialist, or liberal Europe. This genius writer, incidentally, considered Roman Catholicism to be even worse than socialism and atheism, which he hated with all his heart and soul. This is why, his prince Lev Myshkin from *The Idiot*, otherwise gentle as a lamb, once has a terrible fit of anger and, in the Yepanchins' drawing room, in the presence of St. Petersburg's high society, cries out his thoughts on the "essence of the papacy" hitherto hidden at the bottom of his soul:

> Non possumus. To my thinking Roman Catholicism is not even a religion, but simply the continuation of the Western Roman Empire, and everything in it is subordinated to that idea, faith to begin with. The Pope seized the earth, an earthly throne, and grasped the sword; everything has gone on in the same way since, only they have added to the sword lying, fraud, deceit, fanaticism, superstition, villainy. They have trifled with the most holy, truthful, sincere, fervent feelings of the people; they have bartered it all, all for money, for base earthly power. And isn't that the teaching of Antichrist? How could atheism fail to come from them? Atheism has sprung from Roman Catholicism itself. It originated with them themselves. Can they have believed themselves? It has been strengthened by revulsion from them; it is begotten by their lying and their spiritual impotence! Atheism! Among us it is only the exceptional classes who don't believe, those who... have lost their roots. But over there, in Europe, a terrible mass of the people themselves are beginning to lose their faith – at first from darkness and lying, and now from fanaticism and hatred of the church and Christianity.[2]

On 11 November 2021 – exactly on the bicentenary of Dostoyevsky's birth – the contemporary Russian writer and thinker Dmitriy Bykov (born in 1967) wrote an article, soon to be widely known, entitled "Dvesti let zhesti" ("Two hundred years of horror"), where he named Dostoyevsky "the father of Russian fascism":

> I believe that Dostoyevsky can be rightfully called the father of Russian fascism – precisely because what lies at the root of fascism is the denial of logic and rationality and the belief in the primacy of the dark side of man. […] Secondly, by attacking the lackey

2 Fyodor Dostoevsky. *The Idiot: a Novel in Four Parts*, trans. from the Russian by Constance Garnett (London: William Heinemann, 1913), p. 546. Cf. Fedor Mikhaylovich Dostoyevskiy. *Idiot*, in: Fedor Mikhaylovich Dostoyevskiy. *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy v tridtsati tomakh*, ed. by Vasiliy Grigor'yevich Bazanov, Georgiy Mikhaylovich Fridlender and others (33 vols.; Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, Leningradskoye otdeleniye, 1972–1990), Vol. 8 (1973), pp. 450–451.

> idea of utility and common sense[3] […] Dostoyevsky constantly criticizes the West for its excess of rationality, and in Russia he sees a treasure-trove of living faith that does not use reason. One does not require a long search to find countless anti-European, anti-Polish, anti-Semitic attacks in the "Winter Notes on Summer Impressions," in the *Writer's Diary,* in *The Possessed* – Dostoyevsky never concealed his beliefs.[4]

Bykov then defended the same belief about Dostoyevsky on 10 March 2022 – two weeks after Putin's armed invasion of Ukraine by Russia – in an online lecture for the Jagiellonian University and the Carpathian State University in Krosno in the sub-Carpathian region. Of course, this is nothing surprising, since the invasion was carried out from the very beginning under the banner of Russian fascism, also embellished with religious slogans, often drawn from Dostoyevsky.[5] The lecture and the discussion that followed took place as part of the newly created series of meetings at the Institute of East Slavic Philology of the Jagiellonian University, entitled "A Ray of Light in the Kingdom of Darkness." The title of this series refers to a once very well-known article from 1860 by Nikolai Dobrolubov (1836–1831), who wrote apologetically about the famous drama *The Storm* by Alexandr Ostrovsky (1823–1886), published in 1859. Today, this "ray of light in the kingdom of darkness" may mean a revolt of Russian intellectuals against Putin's military archaism, rooted in nationalist ideologies, that had been created and developed over the last two hundred years in Tsarist Russia, the USSR and the Russian Federation.[6]

Naturally, Bykov is not the first to recognize the inhuman face of contemporary Russian "religious ideology," rooted in classical and then degenerated

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3 The contemptuous epithet "lackey" in relation to the Enlightenment ideas of "utility and common sense" is, of course, the view of Dostoyevsky himself, and by no means that of Bykov, who writes about him critically and to whom both principles are very close.

4 Dmitriy Bykov. "Dvesti let zhesti: chelovek-legenda," *Sobesednik+*, No. 6, 2021, p. 13. Also available online: Dmitriy Bykov. "Dvesti let zhesti. Dmitriy Bykov – o Dostoyevskom: 11 noyabrya Rossiya otmechayet dvukhvekovoy yubiley klassika," *Sobesednik*, No. 6, 2021, p. 13. Web. https://sobesednik.ru/kultura-i-tv/20210726-dvesti-let-zesti [accessed 12.04.2022].

5 An audio-video recording of this one-hour-long meeting in Russian can be found online. See "Dmitry Bykov on the genesis of Russian fascism. Lecture at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, 10 March 2022. Lecturer: prof. Grzegorz Przebinda. Meeting in Russian as part of the new series 'A ray of light in the kingdom of darkness'." Web. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a03o7BcTfFg [accessed 13.04.2022].

6 Cf. Grzegorz Przebinda. "Dmitrij Bykow rozmraża Rosję," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Cracow, No. 40 (3667), 20 Oct., 2019, pp. 102–106 (Appendix: *Conrad Festival*).

Slavophilism. Such Slavophilism rejected the basic cultural heritage of Europe, and often treated the history of its native Russia as subsequent volumes of *The Sacred History.* This is what was claimed with all seriousness by Konstantin Aksakov (1817–1860), one of the three pillars of (regrettably) classical, Slavophilism, next to the above-mentioned Kireyevsky and Khomyakov. Aksakov also wrote that "Russian history has the meaning of a Worldwide Confession and can be read as the lives of Saints."[7]

18 March 2022, the day when, running amok with its fascism, Putin's Russia celebrated in Moscow the eighth anniversary of the annexation of Crimea, coincided with the 90th anniversary of the birth of Friedrich Gorenstein (1932–2002), an outstanding Russian writer who was born in Kiev in a family of Ukrainian Jews and from 1980 on lived in exile in West Germany until his death. And it was in 1986 in Munich that he published his novel masterpiece *Psalom: roman-razmyshleniye v chetyrekh kaznyakh Gospodnikh* (*The* Psalm: *Novel-Reflection about the Lord's Four Punishments*), written in the years 1974–1975 back in the USSR. I was lucky to get to know this book, also in Munich, soon after it was written, as I spent the years 1987–1988 there, writing my doctoral dissertation *Włodzimierz Sołowjow wobec historii* (*Vladimir Solovyov on History*, 1992) and developing contacts with Russian émigrés in Bavaria. And at the very appropriate moment, the publisher and writer Boris Khazanov (1928–2022) presented me with the first edition of Gorenstein's *Psalm*. The publisher, who rightly considered this novel a masterpiece, recommended it to me with conviction as a creative continuation of *The Master and Margarita*. After reading *The Psalm*, I saw the universal themes of Solovyov's in it as well.

In the last three chapters of the present volume, I argue that this greatest and most universal Russian thinker of the second half of the nineteenth century was always very firmly opposed to what he calls "zoological patriotism" in Russia.[8] He was especially indignant when that "patriotism" adopted a quasi-religious face. Gorenstein, who in the 1970s observed the revival of this very nationalist Orthodoxy in the officially atheistic USSR, referred to it in his novel with the deepest concern. Here is the fictional scene at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow:

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7 Konstantin Sergeyevich Aksakov. "Raznyya otdel'nyya zametki (1)," in: *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy Konstantina Sergeyevicha Aksakova*, ed. by Ivan Sergeyevich Aksakov, Vol. 1 (Moskva: V tipografii P. Bakhmeteva, 1861), p. 625.

8 Vladimir Sergeyevich Solov'yev. *Natsional'nyy vopros v Rossii*, Vol. 2, chap. 9: "Idoly i idealy," in: *Sobraniye sochineniy Vladimira Sergeyevicha Solov'yeva* (12 vols.; Bruxelles: Izdatel'stvo "Zhizn' s Bogom," 1966–1970), Vol. 5 (1966), p. 393.

> The woman looks at the painting *The Appearance of Christ Before the People*,[9] and Andrei looks at her and thinks: "Here she is – a Russian believer. In society, during religious disputes, much is now said that atheism has died and there is a religious revival. Okay, let us agree that atheism has lost, but did religion in Russia necessarily win anything from it? Having learned nothing, it is now reborn with its former *yurodstvo*[10] instead of feeling, with headache-evoking disputes over Christ, it is reborn along with the simple folk who do not argue about Christ, but who expect the same from it as from Stalin the Georgian, from Razin the Turk,[11] or from some other Russian ataman. And if, in the future, Russia is destined to try to save itself through the national-folk consciousness, it will be neither materialistic nor atheistic. The national-religious mask will be worn by the Russian fascism saviour. First of all, what was called 'atheism' has already become really discredited in Russia, has lost its freshness, and has become disgusting. Secondly, in the national sphere, atheism did not show the necessary flexibility, it turned out to be sluggish, while Orthodoxy repeatedly proved in the past that it could freely praise the national power. And now it is also attractive to young people precisely because of its freshness."[12]

In the context of similar considerations, it is worth recalling the opinion about Dostoyevsky and the "eternal problems" he raises which was presented in 1990 by another eminent writer and thinker of contemporary Russia – Viktor Yerofeyev (born in 1947). His volume of essays on literature entitled *In a Maze of Cursed Problems* is already an absolute classic of the genre. And his comments on Dostoyevsky are, in my opinion, among the best passages of all critical world literature on the author of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Having dealt with the works on Dostoyevsky for decades, I have noticed already long ago that his religious world of ideas not only excludes any kind of agreement between Russia and Europe, but also endorses an exclusion of humanistic ethics that does not need religious rooting, which is threatening for humanity, even in the twenty-first century. Nonetheless, Yerofeyev– in opposition to both Dostoevsky and his demonic hero Ivan Karamazov – confidently formulates the following ethical credo, which implies an urgent need for secular ethics:

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9 *The Appearance of Christ Before the People* – the famous work by the Russian painter Alexandr Ivanov (1806–1858), painted in Italy in 1837–1857.

10 *yurodstvo* – foolishness in Christ. One of the types of mystical holiness in medieval Rus, originating in Byzantium, completely rejecting reason and traditional culture.

11 Stepan Razin (1630–1671) – leader of the popular Don Cossack uprising in Russia in 1667–1771, the largest in the history of tsarist Russia in the times before Catherine II (1762–1796). The term "Turk" used by Gorenstein to refer to Razin may be due to the fact that the Crimean Tatar origin is attributed to him on his mother's side.

12 Fridrikh Gorenshteyn. *Psalom: roman-razmyshleniye v chetyrekh kaznyakh Gospodnikh* (München: Strana i mir, 1986), pp. 354–355.

> It will be much more logical to acknowledge the falsehood of the *first* thesis ["If there is no God, then everything is allowed" – G.P.] and propose another: "if there is no God, then not everything is allowed," which in the combination "if there is God, then not everything is allowed" gives us the right to conclude that by no means every act is permitted to man – completely *independently* of the existence of God. In this way, the thesis "if there is no God, then everything is allowed" does not have the power of an axiom, on the contrary – it is false.[13]

Both Yerofeyev and Bykov, of course, recognize the multidimensionality of Dostoevsky's work and its timeless value when it comes to, for example, criticizing – of course potentially – the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. They support the writer's noble compassion for the "insulted and humiliated." They also cannot but respectfully bow to the vision of a "pink Christianity" by Dostoyevsky, so sharply criticized by Leontiev, the proclaimer of Christianity of the sword and fear, as is discussed in more detail in the first chapter of this volume. Nevertheless, it is both Dostoyevsky – as an apologist of the Russian nationalist religion that stands in opposition to Europe and its rationalism – and Leontiev – as a defender of the state religion of the whip of a mystical hue – that remain favourites of the political regime in Russia in the twenty-first century and the masses of ideologues and hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church that support it, under the lead by the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Cyril I (born in 1946).

The next two protagonists of this study – Herzen and Chernyshevsky – have been presented in separate chapters only in passing. However, a considerably detailed analysis of very important extracts of their work reflects the general nature of both worldviews quite adequately. Regarding Herzen, most generally speaking, he built his absolutely secular ethics and a critical attitude toward Western Europe (although still hopeful for the future) on the basis of the belief completely opposite to Dostoevsky's. Namely, Herzen believed that any religion could only hinder such a desirable rapprochement between Russia and Europe, and, that is why, the Eastern and Western man should build their future on heroic anti-theism. He considered "semper in motu" ("always on the move") the motto of his times, but in this *panta rei* of his there was always one constant value – the belief that one must create one's fate completely independently, without regard to any extra-terrestrial forces from above or below. First, Herzen was a Hegelian cabinet revolutionist who placed his hope in the social *ratio* of history, and then – in the face of the defeat of the 1848 revolution in Europe – he

13 Viktor Yerofeyev. "Vera i gumanizm Dostoyevskogo," in: Viktor Yerofeyev. *V labirinte proklyatykh voprosov* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Sovetskiy pisatel," 1990), p. 34.

announced that each individual man should only save himself. Before 1848, he had seen a chance to fulfil his Faustian dreams in Europe, while after 1848, he hastily transferred his hope to "peasant Russia," building just then an unfulfilled vision of "Russian socialism." He had always fought against all providentialism, as he saw the essence of history only in itself, and man was for him the only active spiritual and material subject of history.

Until 1905, both Herzen and, especially, Chernyshevsky remained deeply marginalized in official discussions about the Russian state and nation and their relation to Europe. However, in Bolshevik Russia after 1917, and especially in the USSR, both of them enjoyed the great support of the authorities, and consequently also the interest of the legion of domestic researchers of Russian thought obedient to this authority. The very strong position of Chernyshevsky in the USSR was also due to the fact that Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) himself recognized him as his ideological guru, seeking in the world of ideas of this late grandson of the Enlightenment for a way to justify bloody historical materialism.

In my monograph on Chernyshevsky published twenty-five years ago, I described him precisely as "the late grandson of the Enlightenment," and I also attempted to prove that the thinker had absolutely nothing to do with the later bloody Bolshevik revolution. Indeed, Chernyshevsky's image as a socialist encyclopedist is the genuine ideological portrait of the thinker – both his texts and his activity testify to it. Unfortunately, a false image of the writer has become established in the history of Russian ideas. Such a false mythology was promoted on the one hand by Lenin, and on the other, by a chorus of conservative critics, who – still today – accuse Chernyshevsky of things with which he had nothing to do. The false accusations against him concern his alleged support for a bloody revolution in Russia; that is why, in the fourth chapter of this volume, I try to refute this false ideological view with the help of a detailed and in-depth analysis of his famous novel *What Is to Be Done?*.

In today's Russia at the end of the twentieth century and in the first decades of the twenty-first century, both Herzen and Chernyshevsky have once again been pushed to a far margin of ideological discussions, and now Dostoyevsky and Leontiev have taken their place. Nevertheless, it is Herzen and Chernyshevsky – with all their social utopianism, and sometimes even naive futurology – who now have many more ideas to offer to the open-minded, pro-European Russian than their Russian opponents from the old and new epochs.

A special place in my research on Russian philosophical thought has long been occupied by Vladimir Solovyov, mentioned above several times, who is consequently the protagonist of three extensive chapters of the present volume. The first chapter (the seventh in the volume) deals with his religious ecumenism

in relation to Roman Catholics and followers of the Orthodox Church in Russia, the second chapter (the eighth in the volume) concerns Catholic Poles and followers of Judaism in the same universal context, while the third chapter (the ninth, the last major one in the volume) deals with the declining period of Solovyov's life and work. In the decade 1891–1900, the thinker first formulated an extremely harsh critique, precisely valid even today, of the "medieval religious worldview," then established the principles of autonomous ethics independent of religion and ended his life and work with an apocalyptic vision of the end of history, where ethics was, unfortunately, reduced by him – in the spirit of Dostoevsky and anti-Tolstoy – to the role of *ancilla religionis* (servant of religion).

Solovyov was the second Russian thinker, after Solzhenitsyn, to whom I devoted a few years of my early research of the ideological, cultural, and historical heritage of modern Russia. Publishing a series of articles on Solovyov in the late 1980s, in the then communist Poland, I appreciated especially highly both his ecumenism and criticism of religious nationalism and medieval Christianity as well as his prophetic description of the apocalyptic "falsifying of the good," presented in *A Short Story of the Anti-Christ*. In the 1980s, the apocalyptic visions of Solovyov seemed to me extremely relevant, which resulted also from my position as a researcher living and working within a communist space, spiritually alien to me. I even argued then with Andrzej Walicki,[14] who was in America and who in 1973 described Solovyov's prophecy as "of questionable quality," while he arbitrarily considered the opinion of others that *A Short Story of the Anti-Christ* was a work of genius to be excessive.[15] For me, this prophecy was extremely valuable in the 1980s, as it described the communist "falsification of the good" most adequately. Today – as will be mentioned again at the very end of this introduction – the

14 Grzegorz Przebinda. "Apokalipsa Włodzimierza Sołowjowa," *Znak*, No. 11–12 (384–385), 1986, p. 66.

15 Andrzej Walicki. *Rosyjska filozofia i myśl społeczna od oświecenia do marksizmu* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1973), p. 357. Cf. Andrzej Walicki. *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. from the Polish by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1979), p. 391. Let us add that in his latest work, Walicki did not change his old opinion, repeating it, incidentally, verbatim. See Andrzej Walicki. *Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od Oświecenia do renesansu religijno-filozoficznego* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2005), p. 561. See also Andrzej Walicki. *The Flow of Ideas. Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to the Religious-Philosophical Renaissance*, ed. by Cain Elliott, trans. [from the Polish] by Jolanta Kozak and Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015), p. 583.

apocalyptic vision of Solovyov can also be very convenient as a tool of criticism against contemporary, criminal falsifiers of good in Putin's Russia.

When in the second half of the nineties I wrote the above-mentioned book *From Chaadayev to Berdyaev: The Dispute over God and Man in Russian Philosophical Thought 1832–1922*, I tried very hard to emphasize the difference in my research approach in relation to Walicki's assessment of Russian worldviews. Today I also see this difference, but I also notice equally clearly my spiritual ties to Walicki. They deepened in the autumn of 1998, when we met for the first time at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Back then, Walicki rated highly Russia's religious and, at the same time, pro-European thinkers, including Solovyov, and I, in turn, was ideologically empathetic to Russian pro-European non-religious thinkers, such as Herzen or Chernyshevsky. During one of our meetings and discussions at that time, held in 1998–2004 in Krakow, Warsaw, and once even in Moscow,[16] Walicki even expressed his solidarity with me for respecting Chernyshevsky as a person and a philosopher.

What I always lacked in the thinking of Walicki as a historian of ideas was, above all, a critical reflection on his own research method and a reflection on the complex issue of whether his descriptions, analyses, and syntheses regarding Russia had always been identical, regardless of place and time in which they were created. The lack of such self-reflection may create an otherwise erroneous impression of his infallibility in the affairs of Russia, even reinforced by many of Walicki's younger successors in today's Poland. And yet this outstanding researcher – writing his great work in the very long period of 1952–2020 consecutively in communist Poland, Australia, the USA, and then independent Poland – must have undergone an ideological evolution, in the process exploring Russian thought and Russia itself.

16 It was on 15 June 2000 when we both took part in a conference – organized by Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow and the Polish Institute at the Polish Embassy – on the influence of Russia's past on its relations with the West, including Poland. I talked there about the positive influence of religion, while Walicki mainly emphasized other pro-European intellectual tendencies in Russia. A few days later, I had a speech at the Polish Institute in Moscow, entitled "Rossiya v propovedyakh papy rimskogo Yoanna Pavla II" ("Russia in the teaching of John Paul II"). Walicki, who was also present at this meeting, emphasized with approval the interest of Polish Pope in Russia, still in his Krakow times. In the 1970s, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła (1920–2005) organized intellectual discussions on Polish Romanticism and its attitude towards Russia, in which Walicki himself also actively participated.

This lack of self-reflection is, in my opinion, the greatest paradox of Walicki's creative method, the more so because his ideological evolution is not at all difficult to notice. Around the mid-1990s, he began to write more and more favourably about the Russian universal religious thought, which culminated in the book *Rosja, katolicyzm i sprawa polska* (*Russia, Catholicism and the Polish Question* [2002]), which mainly concerned the nineteenth-century world. At the same time, but completely independently of Walicki, I wrote a somewhat related work on the figure of the Polish Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) and his pro-European religious reflection on Russia and Ukraine. Already after it was published in 2001, my book *Większa Europa: Papież wobec Rosji i Ukrainy* (*A Greater Europe: The Pope on Russia and Ukraine*) received a favourable mention in the work by Walicki: "A comprehensive reconstruction of this great vision of John Paul II is contained in the book by Grzegorz Przebinda, *A Greater Europe: The Pope on Russia and Ukraine,* Krakow 2001. While writing the present book, completed in 2000, I did not know this fundamental work. I am all the more pleased with the similarity in his general characteristics of the 'Slavic teaching' of John Paul II."[17]

For the sake of completeness, I will add that my evolution in the research approach to Russian thought was somewhat opposite to the one clearly visible in Walicki's works. While back in the 1990s, I was inclined to emphasize in my evaluative description the well-known warning of Dostoevsky: "If there is no God, then everything is allowed," now I also try not to overlook the enormous threat that the archaic, pseudo-religious Russian thought poses for Europe and for Russia itself, which has found a very clear reflection in the present study.

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The study was completed in its main part at the end of December 2021, and I am finishing the introduction in mid-April 2022, which is more than fifty days after Putin's Russia unleashed a war against Ukraine, and at the same time – all free Europe and the democratic world. This is neither the time nor place for a detailed analysis of the worldview of the dictator of contemporary Russia, but it must be emphasized that in this criminal action against Ukraine, unprecedented in the history of Europe after 1945, Putin uses religious categories abundantly. Here is what the ruler of Moscow announced *urbi et orbi* on 21 February 2022, three days before the invasion of Kyiv:

17 Andrzej Walicki. *Rosja, katolicyzm i sprawa polska* (Warszawa: Prószyński i Spółka, 2002), p. 281.

> In Kiev, they are preparing for a crackdown on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. And it is not an emotional evaluation; specific decisions and documents speak about it. The tragedy of the Church division was cynically transformed by the Ukrainian authorities into an instrument of state policy. The current government of the country is not responding to requests from Ukrainian citizens to lift laws that violate the rights of believers. Moreover, in the Council [Ukrainian Parliament – G.P.] bills were registered, targeted against the clergy and millions of parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.[18]

And already in the proper "war homily," delivered on the Russian state television in the first hours of the war in the morning of 24 February 2022, Putin, in his tirade against the West, openly used Dostoevsky's archaic language:

> Where does this brazen way of talking from the position of one's own uniqueness, infallibility, and the conviction that everything is allowed [Rus. 'vsedozvolennost' – G.P.] come from? Why this contemptuous, disrespectful attitude towards our interests and absolutely legal demands? […] Let us add that American politicians, political scientists, and journalists themselves write and say that within the USA, an "empire of lies" has been created in recent years. And it's hard to disagree – that's what it is.... It can be said with full conviction that the entire so-called Western block, formed by the USA in their own image and likeness, is entirely the same empire of lies.[19]

All the limits of genocidal cynicism were exceeded by Putin on 18 March 2022, when at the Moscow stadium in Luzhniki, during the fascist gathering of crowds on the eighth anniversary of Russia's annexation of Ukrainian Crimea, he assessed the "heroism" of the invaders by referring to the phrase from the Gospel: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15, 13).[20] He then recalled related quotations from the holy books of other great religions – the Koran, the Torah, and the words of the Buddha, taken from the canonical book of Tibetan Buddhism *Kangyur* (*Translation of the Word*): "Never in this world is hatred quenched by hatred. By love alone is it quenched."[21]

In February 2014, soon after the annexation of Crimea, I published a few articles in the Polish high-circulation daily press and specialist magazines, in which

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18 Web. https://tass.ru/politika/13791721?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop [accessed 31.03.2022].

19 Web. https://tass.ru/politika/13829919?ysclid=l16371sas9 [accessed 31.03.2022].

20 All Bible quotes in this book are based on the King James Bible available. Web. https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/ [accessed 31.03.2022].

21 Web. https://lenta.ru/news/2020/11/04/vvputin_citata/?ysclid=l163n6ba5p [accessed 31.03.2022].

it was precisely this "religious" face of Putin's imperialism that I tried to present in relation to Ukraine and countries closest to Russia: "For several years now, the ruler of the Kremlin has wanted to introduce himself to Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians as a man of 'special faith.' He deceives honest, but unfortunately naive Orthodox Christians with information about his baptism and conversion, or talks about Stalin's 'brotherly religiosity.'"[22] Today, I cannot but subscribe to the recent press article of the Polish-German writer and essayist Artur Becker (born in 1968), who on 11 March 2022, in the Warsaw "Rzeczpospolita" daily, in the article "Putin and the Antichrist," compared the current ruler of Russia to the protagonist of the apocalyptic work by Solovyov."[23]

After a long consideration, I also decided to recall in this context one more very important ideological episode, which, unfortunately, will once again confirm Putin's enormous talent in the work of "falsifying of the good". Andrzej Walicki, in his last book *On Russia in a Different Way* (2019), still managed to recall that Putin, during the winter holidays of 2013, instructed his top officials to read works on Russian philosophical thought – a collection of articles from 1948–1954 by the émigré monarchist Ivan Ilyin (1883–1954) entitled *Our Tasks, The Philosophy of Inequality* (written in the summer of 1918, published in 1923) by Nikolai Berdyaev, and *The Justification of the Good* (1894–1897) by Vladimir Solovyov. It is worth quoting Walicki's argument at length, as it is very surprising in this context:

> As the greatest Russian philosopher of the nineteenth century and the main inspirer of the "religious and philosophical renaissance," Solovyov could not be ignored. But it is significant that Putin recommended reading *The Justification of the Good*, which was Solovyov's main work from the period when he abandoned the theocratic utopia that marked Russia's mission to unite the Churches and build a universal Christian empire. It was the work of a religious philosopher, but one thinking in legal and state terms and postulating a far-reaching internal liberalization of the Russian autocracy. Solovyov

22 Grzegorz Przebinda. "Trzeci chrzest Rusi," *Plus Minus. Tygodnik "Rzeczpospolitej*," No. 20 (1107), 17–18 May 2014, pp. P22–P23. Cf. Grzegorz Przebinda. "The Third Baptism of Rus: The Participation of Moscow Orthodox Church in Putin's Expansion in Ukraine," *Przegląd Rusycystyczny*, No. 4 (148), 2014, pp. 5–15. See also: "Co Bóg polecił Putinowi: Mistyczny imperializm Kremla". Z prof. Grzegorzem Przebindą, historykiem idei i znawcą Rosji, rozmawia Jarosław Makowski, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Warsaw, 19–21 kwietnia 2014, No. 92 (8124), pp. 24–25.

23 Artur Becker. "Putin i Antychryst," *Rzeczpospolita*, No. 58 (12213), 11 March, 2022, p. 47. Web. https://www.rp.pl/opinie-polityczno-spoleczne/art35842351–putin-i-antychryst [accessed 15.04.2022].

> appeared in it as a statehooder, criticizing the Russian tradition of legal nihilism and Christian anarchism, which undermined the value of law in the name of morality. At the same time, he postulated the extension of the social obligations of the state, pointing out that the inalienable duty of a modern state ruled by law is to grant the new human right to citizens, which he called "the right to a dignified life," a law incompatible with the neoliberal apology of unlimited market freedom, unfortunately fashionable today, but to a large extent implemented in the developed countries of the liberal world of the twentieth century. He also reaffirmed his position on the necessity for tsarism to respect the civil rights of the population, in particular the rights of religious and national minorities, including Jews and Poles, to whom he attributed an important role in the multi-ethnic superpower. Therefore, the choice of this work as compulsory reading for senior civil servants can be considered quite good.[24]

Everything that Walicki said above with regard to Solovyov is obviously right, and at the same time close not only to his heart, but also to that of anyone who cares about the future of Europe and Russia. The more dizzying, then, is Walicki's claim – formulated five years after the annexation of Crimea, in a situation where Putin had finally dealt with the remnants of free opposition in Russia – that these humanistic values are also endorsed by the Kremlin dictator. The only problem, according to Walicki, was that the above-mentioned work of Solovyov could not be understood by Putin's not very bright officials: "The philosophical density of this text, however, raises doubts as to whether it was feasible for the officials burdened with the task to fulfil it."[25] As is very clear, even a perfect knowledge of the world of ideas and the history of Russia does not necessarily favour – to put it mildly – a rational view of the world.

I began writing this introduction with a reflection that I owe my first serious encounter with Russian philosophical thought to Solzhenitsyn, a writer and thinker who was extremely hostile to the Soviet system. When the Soviet Union was finally about to collapse, and the hitherto forbidden classical Russian philosophy (including the works of Chaadayev and Solovyov) began a triumphant return to the country,[26] in September 1990 Solzhenitsyn, still in exile in America, published – at the same time in Paris and Moscow – the philosophical and political booklet *Kak nam obustroit' Rossiyu?: Posilnyye soobrazheniya* (*Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals*). Note that the English title does not fully reflect the essence of the original. In the English translation, the question

24 Andrzej Walicki. *O Rosji inaczej* (Warszawa: Fundacja Oratio Recta, 2019), p. 217.
25 Andrzej Walicki. *O Rosji inaczej*, p. 217.
26 Grzegorz Przebinda. "Powrót filozofii do Rosji (1989–1992)," *Znak*, No. 1 (462), 1994, pp. 123–136.

mark disappeared from the main sentence of the title, and Solzhenitsyn, who did not consider himself a prophet, used the question mark deliberately. Likewise, the translation of the Russian verb "obustroit" into "rebuild" also unfortunately obscures Solzhenitsyn's real intentions. He did not recommend the reconstruction of a Russia that "had once been," but postulated the way to organize the new Russia that was emerging before his eyes. The writer did not accept the postulate of the then Secretary General of the Soviet Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev (1931–2022), to incorporate this new Russia in the "Common European Home," as he felt much closer to "A Europe of Nations" of Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970), although he never explicitly expressed it. In the face of the many myths and misunderstandings surrounding the character and ideological attitude of Solzhenitsyn in his later years, I will quote a larger excerpt from his booklet *Rebuilding Russia*. This paragraph clearly shows that in 1990 Solzhenitsyn had absolutely nothing to do with the ideology and practice of the restoration of the Russian Empire, which Putin is ruthlessly implementing today in his unprecedented war against Ukraine:

> The twentieth-century Russian philosopher Ivan llyin has written that the spiritual life of a nation is more important than the size of its territory or even its economic prosperity; the health and happiness of the people are of incomparably greater value than any external goal based on prestige.[27] […] We must stop reciting like parrots: "We are proud to be Russian." "We are proud of our immense motherland." "We are proud ..." It is time we understood that *after* all the things of which we are so justifiably proud our people gave in to the spiritual catastrophe of 1917 (and, more broadly, of 1915–32). Since then, we have become almost pathetically unlike our former selves. No longer can we be so presumptuous in our plans for the future as to dream of restoring the might and eminence of the former Russia. When our fathers and grandfathers threw down their weapons during a deadly war, deserting the front in order to plunder their neighbor at home, they in effect *made a choice* for us, with consequences for one century so far, but who knows maybe for two. Nor can we take pride in the Soviet-German war in which we lost over thirty million men, ten times more than the enemy, while at the same time strengthening the despotism over us. "Taking pride" is not what we need to do, nor should we be attempting to impose ourselves on the lives of others. We must, rather,

27 Let me note as an aside that the extract from the work of Ivan Ilyin quoted by Solzhenitsyn – and there are many more similar extracts in the work of this early twentieth-century thinker – eloquently proves that Ilyin cannot be treated *in toto* as an "ideologue of fascism." Such an opinion spread especially after 2013, when Putin included the book *Our Tasks* in the canon of mandatory reading for his officials, as I have already mentioned above, after Walicki.

> grasp the reality of the acute and debilitating illness that is affecting our people, and pray to God that He grant us recovery, along with the wisdom to achieve it.[28]

Therefore, it is not surprising in this 1990 context that Solzhenitsyn referred to Vladimir Solovyov as follows: "Every people, even the very smallest, represents a unique facet of God's design. As Vladimir Solovyov has written, paraphrasing the Christian commandment: 'You must love all other people as you love your own.'"[29] And yet, after the release of *Rebuilding Russia*, many Ukrainians accused Solzhenitsyn of being an opponent of the independence of their country and nation. It is difficult to confirm this objection with an appropriate quotation from the booklet in question. Indeed, Solzhenitsyn did appeal to both Ukrainians and Belarusians to remain voluntarily together with the Russians in the new state structure that was being formed from the USSR – let us recall that he was preparing his mini-treatise at a time when the USSR was still functioning. However, what appears to be of key importance is this clear and firm statement of Solzhenitsyn's at that time: "Of course, if the Ukrainian people should genuinely wish to separate, no one would dare to restrain them by force."[30] And it is also worth adding an excerpt from a letter addressed to the conference on Russian-Ukrainian relations organized in Toronto in April 1981: "In my heart, there is no place for a Russo-Ukrainian conflict, and if, God forbid, things get to the extreme, I can say: Never, under no circumstances, will either I or my sons join in a Russo-Ukrainian clash, no matter how some hotheads may push us towards one."[31]

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28 Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. *Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals*, trans. [from the Russian] and annotated by Alexis Klimoff (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991), pp. 12–13. Cf. Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn. *Kak nam obustroit' Rossiyu?: Posilnyye soobrazheniya.* Spetsial'noye prilozheniye k "Russkoy mysli," No. 3846 – 21 sentyabrya 1990 (Parizh: Russkaya mysl', 1990), pp. 6–7.

29 Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. *Rebuilding Russia…*, p. 21. Cf. Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn. *Kak nam obustroit' Rossiyu?*, p. 10.

30 Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. *Rebuilding Russia…*, p. 18. Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn. *Kak nam obustroit' Rossiyu?*, p. 9.

31 "Alexandr Solzhenitsyn predicted current situation in Ukraine almost 50 years ago," *Russia Beyond*, May 21, 2014. Web. https://www.rbth.com/arts/2014/05/21/alexander_solzhenitsyn_predicted_current_situation_in_ukraine_almost_50__35395 [accessed 11.04.2022]. The Russian original of the letter was published in weekly *Russkaya Mysl'*, Paris, 18 June 1981. In Russia, it was published for the first time in the monthly *Zvezda*, Sankt Petersburg, No. 12, 1993.

Any other later views of Solzhenitsyn on Ukraine, sometimes genuinely controversial, seem to be of secondary importance in this situation. But how to explain the fact that President Putin has become an admirer of Solzhenitsyn in the last few years? When, in March 2022, I organized the meetings with two contemporary Russian writers: Dmitriy Bykov and Boris Akunin (born in 1956) at the Jagiellonian University and the Carpathian State College in Krosno, I asked them about the relationship between Putin and Solzhenitsyn. In a question to Bykov, I expressed my conviction that Solzhenitsyn would not approve of the current war between Russia and Ukraine, but I wanted to hear from the writer whether Solzhenitsyn's anti-Enlightenment worldview[32] does not contain any seeds of Putinism? Bykov replied:

> As Sinyavsky[33] once said, Solzhenitsyn is evolving and not necessarily towards heaven. The former Solzhenitsyn was delighted with Ukrainian nationalists, the later Solzhenitsyn was afraid of them and considered them to be a hostile force. I rather suspect that he would not accept the war, of course, but he was afraid of the future and supported Putin's conservatism. Already in the 1970s, Solzhenitsyn was an ideologue of Russian nationalism.[34]

In turn, asking Akunin the same question, I recalled that on 11 December 2018 – exactly on the centenary of Solzhenitsyn's birth – I took part in a scholarly conference devoted to the author of *The Gulag Archipelago*, organized by Natalia Solzhenitsyn, the writer's widow. At the same time, I was able to listen on-site to Putin's speech during the unveiling of Solzhenitsyn's monument in Moscow on Taganka. Before I refer to the ideological slogans of this speech, I would like to cite Akunin's reply:

> Alexandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn was a man of anti-liberal views, as we all know. He was an enemy of communism and totalitarianism, but that doesn't mean he was a friend of democracy. He was convinced of a special national mission of Russia, romantic and utopian in my opinion […] He believed in it. But I do not think that the state can have

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32 Cf. Grzegorz Przebinda. "Sołżenicyn w sporze z tradycją Oświecenia," *Ethos*, Lublin, No. 2–3 (30–31), 1995, pp. 126–137.

33 Andrei Sinyavsky (1925–1997) – a writer and thinker of liberal convictions, from 1973 in exile in Paris; he lectured on Russian literature at the Sorbonne. He clashed sharply with Solzhenitsyn, then also an émigré, in the article "Solzhenitsyn as a *Constructor of the New Unanimity.*" See Andrey Sinyavskiy. "Solzhenitsyn kak ustroitel' novogo yedinomysliya," *Sintaksis: Publitsistika. Kritika. Polemika*," Paris, No. 14, 1985, pp. 16–32.

34 Dmitriy Bykov o genezise russkogo faschizma. Vedushchiy prof. Gzhegozh Pzhebinda. 10 March 2022. URL. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a03o7BcTfFg. The extract from 4.00 to 6.00 min. [accessed 31.03.2022].

> any particular path of development, people are more or less the same everywhere […] He believed, I do not believe […] Because it is in line with Putin's belief, which in turn draws on this eternal musty doctrine on Russia's special mission...[35]

The above-mentioned three-minute speech by Putin at the unveiling of the monument did not contain any passage that would demonstrate a deeper understanding of Solzhenitsyn's work. The commander of the armed forces of the Russian Federation did not go beyond a few banal or obvious observations. He emphasized that Solzhenitsyn had been a front officer during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945, but did not mention the fact that in 1945, straight from the front, the writer had been sent to a labour camp for eight years, and then to the "eternal exile." Putin also remained silent about the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn from the USSR in 1974 and depriving him of the Soviet citizenship. Instead, he emphasized Solzhenitsyn's "love for the homeland" and the fact that the great writer was able to "distinguish the genuine, indigenous national Russia from the totalitarian system that brought harsh experiences to millions of people." Putin also approved – by modulating his voice accordingly – of the critical attitude of Solzhenitsyn towards "Russophobia" in the West: "While in exile, Alexandr Isayevich never let anyone speak badly about his homeland, he was opposed to all manifestations of Russophobia." Finally, he welcomed the fact that Solzhenitsyn, in his works, defended the moral foundations of politics and social life: "So that the most severe, dramatic experiences that have fallen on Russia would never repeat again, that our multi-national nation would live in dignity and justice."[36]

The very important "Solzhenitsyn-Putin" problem requires a separate study.[37] One cannot ignore the fact of their two personal meetings: on 20 September 2000 and 12 June 2007 in the writer's house near Moscow – which Putin also referred to in his speech at the monument. In this context, Solzhenitsyn's interview for the German weekly *Spiegel*, also published in English at the end of July

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35 Dva chasa Borisa Akunina v razgovore s Gzhegohzem Pshebindoy. Web. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzdE20s0OZc. 16 March 2022. Fragment from 1.33.00 to 1.35.16 [accessed 11.04.2022].

36 https://ok.ru/video/1923453161934 [accessed 11.04.2022].

37 See Robert Horvath. "Apologist of Putinism? Solzhenitsyn, the Oligarchs, and the Specter of Orange Revolution," *The Russian Review*, Vol. 70, No. 2, April 2011, pp. 300–318. See also Ben A. McVicker. "The Creation and Transformation of a Cultural Icon: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in Post-Soviet Russia, 1994–2008," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*, Vol. 53, No. 2–4, June-Sept.-Dec. 2011, pp. 305–333.

2007,[38] is very important in this context. However, when looking for differences and parallels between Solzhenitsyn and Putin, it should be remembered that this great writer – for many years the true "conscience of Russia" – died long before the current war, not even living to witness the war between Russia and Georgia, which broke out in August 2008. Therefore, his assessment of the greatest villain of Russia in the twenty-first century, who without any embarrassment admits his ties with the Gospel and with Vladimir Solovyov, could not, of course, be adequate. It is worth strongly emphasizing that on 11 December 2018, in front of the Solzhenitsyn monument, Putin also used the method of "falsifying of the good" mentioned several times above. In 2019, it turned out to be effective in the process of tantalizing Walicki, and now it is intended primarily to deceive the largely helpless "Russian folk," who, under the influence of propaganda, recognized the "Ukrainian war" of Russia as a peaceful and defensive mission. Vladimir Solovyov would, of course, consider a similar "peace mission" to be the criminal culmination of "zoological patriotism" and the final outcome of "falsifying of the good," but it is possible that the above-mentioned Slavophile Konstantin Aksakov would consider this action a "holy war" of good-natured Russia against schismatic Europe.

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Closing the main body of this book at the end of December 2021, I recalled the fact that in the autumn of 1922 Soviet Russia had expelled from its borders many outstanding writers and thinkers, who for the next half a century spent in exile tried to build a common spiritual home with Europeans. Two months before the war, I also emphasized that the situation in Russia – although it began to resemble those dark times of 1922 – did not completely deprive us of any hope for a revival of free Russian thought. Today, in April 2022, it cannot be ignored that since February 2014, and especially since 24 February 2022, there has been an exodus of outstanding Russian intellectuals and thinkers to the free West. Among them are Akunin and Bykov,[39] mentioned above, and others can be added to the list: Lyudmila Ulitskaya (born in 1943, now in Berlin), Vladimir Sorokin (born in 1955, now in Germany), Victor Shenderovich (born in 1958, now in Warsaw),

38 Web. https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/spiegel-interview-with-alexander-solzhenitsyn-i-am-not-afraid-of-death-a-496211.html [accessed 31.03.2022].

39 Dmitriy Bykov, who left for the US in October 2021, has declared that he will return to Russia as soon as his contract at Cornell University in Ithaca ends. Akunin, in turn, who has been in exile since 2014, swears that he will come to Russia only when Putin no longer rules.

Vladimir Pastukhov (born in 1963, now in England), or Sergei Gluhovsky (born in 1979, now in Barcelona). Another writer and critic, Alexander Genis (born in 1953), who has been in exile in the USA since 1977, published the text entitled "Chetvertaya volna: Global'nyye russkiye" ("The Fourth Wave: Global Russians") in the free Moscow periodical *Novaya Gazeta*[40] on 25 March 2022, literally a few days before its closure by the regime. He is trying to prove there that this "fourth wave" of emigration began after the "Crimean spring" of 2014. The four waves were to be the following: the first one under Lenin, the second one under Stalin, the third one under Brezhnev, and the fourth, current one under Putin.[41]

But in Russia itself, too, another chapter of free literature and thought is written by Andrei Zubov (born in 1952), Nikolai Svanidze (born in 1955), Maria Stepanova (born in 1972), Guzel Yakhina (born in 1977), Alexei Ivanov (born in 1969) who all persist there – and probably by many others, whose names we will only know some day. At the end, I would like to quote an excerpt from a speech by Natalia Solzhenitsyn (born in 1939), delivered at the above-mentioned opening of the writer's monument in Moscow:

> I would like to emphasize that the present world has really gone crazy. In many places of this world people do not live as they should, they kill each other, starve each other, and drive each other into poverty. […] And that's why the *Day of in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is not over yet. And we should all remember this, look around us with our eyes open. And if we see that Ivan Denisovich should be given a hand, helped, then each of us should do it.[42]

At the moment, when the worst possible "Russian idea" has been instantly transformed before our eyes into a terrible war – notably, due to Putin, who stood next to the Solzhenitsyn statue during its unveiling – Ivan Denisovich should be searched for in neighbouring Ukraine – in Mariupol, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kramatorsk, Hostomel, Bucha, and Buzhanka near Kiev as well as in the capital city of Kiev on the Dnieper. The present book on Russian thought from Chaadayev to Solovyov will hopefully help the reader to find some clues for such searches and finds. But in its other passages, it should rather serve as a warning against the practical consequences of Russian ideas that are all but sinister.

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40 Its Editor-in-Chief is Dmitriy Muratov (born in 1961), laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021.

41 Aleksandr Genis. "Chetvertaya volna: Global'nyye russkiye," *Novaya gazeta*, No. 31 (3331), 25 March, 2022, p. 19. URL. https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2022/03/24/chetvertaia-volna [accessed 31.03.2022].

42 Web. https://ok.ru/video/1923453161934 [accessed 31.03.2022].

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