

Antoine Arjakovsky. *The Way: Religious Thinkers of the Russian Emigration in Paris and Their Journal, 1925-1940*. Translated by Jerry Ryan. Edited by John A. Jillions and Michael Plekon. Foreword by Rowan Williams. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013. xiv, 766 pp. \$65.00 (paper). ISBN: 0-268-02040-X.

Antoine Arjakovsky's magisterial study of the brilliant Russian émigré journal *Путь* (translated here as *The Way*) makes a significant contribution to the international scholarly project of examining the major currents of thought of the Russian religio-philosophical school that arose from the tragic forced emigration of Russia's finest intellectuals from Russia to Europe in 1922. The two sea vessels on which many of them departed from Russia that year became commonly known as the Philosophers' Ships. Such luminaries as Nikolai Berdiaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Ivan Il'in, Semen Frank, and Nikolai Lossky were on those ships. After finding their way to Berlin and staying for about one year in that city, many of the refugee intellectuals settled in Paris. The French capital's somewhat tolerant atmosphere provided Berdiaev and his colleagues with the setting for creating a new home and continuing their publicistic activities.

Arjakovsky introduces into the rapidly growing canon of works in English translation a book that fills a large gap in our understanding of the inner workings of one of the most important journals of the twentieth century. During the last years of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries many of the books published in Paris by the Russian religious philosophers have been translated into English or become the focus of well-crafted studies by Slavists in the West. The deeply spiritual, humane, humble, and erudite views of these thinkers have been championed by preeminent translator Boris Jakim, whose dazzling, tireless efforts have sculpted into English many volumes associated with the circle of contributors to *Путь*. Scholarly monographs by Paul Valliere, Scott Kenworthy, and Matthew Lee Miller, and translations by Penelope V. Burt, Vladimir Wozniuk, Valeria Nollan, and Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, represent the growing number of works that make the contents of *Путь* understandable and reveal to the world the observations of these highly-educated professors and essayists about the turbulent era in which they found themselves.¹

1. Paul Valliere, *Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001); Scott Kenworthy, *The Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825* (London/New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010); Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013); Boris Vysheslavtsev, *The Eternal in Russian Philosophy*, trans. by Penelope V. Burt (Grand

The aforementioned books, along with many others by dedicated scholars, extend the context of *Путь* back into the nineteenth-century spiritual foundations of Russian Orthodox monasticism and the writings of mystical poet and philosopher *par excellence* Vladimir Soloviev, and forward into the Russian Orthodox Church's recovery from the very Soviet repression and atheist dogma that forced Berdiaev and his compatriots onto the Philosophers' Ships in the first place. In a very real way, Berdiaev's liberal editorial stance not only produced a broad array of intelligent opinion in all sixty-one issues of *Путь*, but also paved the way for contemporary Russian Orthodoxy's delicate engagement with modernity. Thus, Arjakovsky's own effort participates in an extremely important cultural phenomenon.

The atmosphere that the émigrés encountered in Europe involved the expected complex cultural and political encounters between different worlds, but also produced the unexpected collaboration between the Russian philosophers and American and European representatives of the Young Men's Christian Association's (YMCA's) "muscular Christianity movement." This eventual collaboration between the YMCA Press in Paris and the writings of the Russian religious philosophers brought forth and preserved for the world a body of profound thought that, without this joint effort, very likely would have been lost. Situated in the center of this fertile intellectual activity was *Путь*, which at one point included one of the major YMCA secretaries, the European Gustave Gerard Kullmann, on its editorial board. In the 1930s Kullmann converted to Russian Orthodoxy. The unique interactions between the Protestant activists associated with the YMCA project and the dignified Russian Orthodox intellectuals (however closely or loosely connected they may have been with the official Russian Orthodox Church) brought about the kind of exchange of ideas and cross-cultural understanding not envisioned by either of the two groups. Berdiaev's journal *Путь* remained at the center of this dialogue for the astonishing fifteen-year period investigated by Arjakovsky.

As the author tells us, most of the contributors to *Путь* were Russian Orthodox, but the journal's editorial policy also made welcome the writings of Catholics, Protestants, and Anglicans. Most contributors lived in Paris, but some came from other parts of France or abroad. A listing of

Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001); Vladimir Soloviev, *The Heart of Reality: Essays on Love, Beauty, and Ethics*, trans. by Vladimir Wozniuk (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2003); Vladimir Soloviev, *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*, trans. by Valeria Nollan (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008); and Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *Divine Sophia: The Wisdom Writings of Vladimir Solovyov* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2009).

the contributors would produce most of the leading intellectuals living in Europe and Russia at that time and able to elaborate their arguments and theories in Russian. The journal's wide-ranging readership comprised Russian émigré students living in Europe (particularly those studying at the St. Sergius Institute in Paris), students involved in the Russian Student Christian Movement, and readers of Russian living all over the world (even as far as Harbin, China, location of the eastern route of exile for Russians after the Revolution of 1917). The journal's writings explored contemporary philosophical, religious, social, and political issues of the day and in many cases articulated the core religio-philosophical and political positions associated with their authors.

Although I have not had the opportunity to consult the original French text,² the English translation reads elegantly and is of a quality that is uniformly high. One comment that I would not place into the category of a quibble, but that nevertheless matters, has to do with the translation of the journal's name. The word *путь* in Russian has a lofty, spiritual connotation that suggests a life's journey or path, whereas the word "way" in English seems too practical, even commonplace for an adequate rendering of the religio-philosophical dimensions of the original Russian.

Arjakovsky's work was originally a Ph.D. dissertation completed in 1998, but it has been successfully revised and updated as an authoritative book consisting of an introduction, three parts, a conclusion, and the author's "Afterword to the English Translation." Each of the three parts focuses on a separate aspect of the journal's identity: modernist, nonconformist, and spiritual. In his afterword Arjakovsky reflects on his own evolution from thinking that the subject of this massive study had little influence on international affairs to realizing quite accurately that the impact of knowing what was on the minds of the contributors to *Путь* in actuality is staggering: "when I observe the intellectual, ecclesial, and political developments of recent years, it only confirms for me the urgency of rediscovering the religious thought of the émigré Russian community based in Paris." (pp. 572-573) The book draws from both archival and published sources; it contains a full scholarly apparatus of extensive notes, references (list of names, works, and their location), and index. In addition, Notre Dame University Press is to be commended for a fine editorial job concerning the overall finished product. This book is recommended for college and university courses on Russian and Western intellectual history, Russian philosophy, and twentieth-century Soviet Russian history. It will also be a source of genuine pleasure for those interested in exploring the riches of Russian thought and those seeking more authentic

2. Antoine Arjakovsky, *La Génération des penseurs religieux de l'émigration russe: La revue La Voie [Путь], 1925-1940* (Kiev/Paris: L'Esprit et la Lettre, 2002).

encounters with Russian culture than much of the superficial analysis of Russia masquerading in today's publishing arena as knowledge of this country and its culture.

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