The Way
The Way

RELIGIOUS THINKERS
OF THE RUSSIAN EMIGRATION IN
PARIS AND THEIR JOURNAL,
1925–1940

ANTOINE ARJAKOVSKY

Translated by Jerry Ryan
Edited by John A. Jillions and Michael Plekon
Foreword by Rowan Williams

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME PRESS
NOTRE DAME, INDIANA

© 2013 University of Notre Dame
## CONTENTS

Foreword vii  
*Rowan Williams*

Acknowledgments xi  
*Michael Plekon*

Note on Transliteration and Other Conventions xiii

### Introduction 1

- The Project and Its Background 1
- A Brief Description of the Journal 17
- The Epistemological Stance of Russian Religious Thought 21

### PART ONE 33

A Modernist Journal (1925–1929)

- A Generation of Modernist Intellectuals 36
- The Modernist Constellation 87
- The Ecumenical Commitment: The Affirmation of the East in Relation to the West 138

### PART TWO 189

A Nonconformist Journal (1930–1935)

- Introduction: New Outlooks 189
- The Ecclesial Frontiers of a Generation 207
- The Paris School 275
- An Ecclesial Commitment off the Beaten Path 323

© 2013 University of Notre Dame
### PART THREE

**A Spiritual Journal (1935–1940)**  
375

- The Paradigm of the Spirit 375
- The Raskol of a Generation of Intellectuals 381
- Two Conflicting Spiritualities 428
- The Common Horizon of the War and the New Jerusalem 470

**Conclusion: The Two “Bodies” of the Review** 519

- The End of the Review’s History (1940–1948) 519
- The Recollections of a Generation in Russia 530
- The Development of Memory in France 551

**Afterword to the English Translation** 571

---

**Notes** 584

**References: Articles Published in The Way** 670

**Index** 717

© 2013 University of Notre Dame
The intellectual creativity of the Russian emigration in Paris is a fairly well-known phenomenon, chronicled very ably by Marc Raeff, with its immediate historical background narrated more recently, with great vividness, by Lesley Chamberlain. But there has been a lack of more detailed studies of the sheer variety of convictions and visions to be found among the émigrés, and of the complicated interweaving of secular and religious politics in Russian Paris.

The main source for following this tangled story is the periodical *Put’*, “The Way,” which from 1925 to 1940 was one of the major vehicles for philosophical and religious discussion among the émigrés. It represented unashamedly the legacy of pre-Revolutionary debates, in which aesthetics, politics, and theology mingled freely in a philosophical climate very alien to many Western observers, yet undeniably lively and critical. The presiding genius in this world, and the creator of *Put’*, was Nikolai Berdyaev, still probably the best-known Russian émigré philosopher in Western intellectual circles: a man of strong and idiosyncratic personal conviction (it is a great mistake, though a frequent one, to regard him as somehow *typical* of Eastern Orthodox religious thinking), but quite content to allow the periodical he edited to carry dramatically diverse and opposed argumentation about virtually every area of its interests.

It is salutary for a Western reader to see how integrally theological and political or philosophical questions are bound together in these pages. Neither Berdyaev nor all of his contributors were conventional orthodox (or Orthodox) believers, but they shared the view that fundamental issues of value, judgment, and virtue could not be intelligently pursued without reference to theology. They rightly saw the direct relevance of theology to all of the most basic issues around the definition of the human, and, whatever their personal commitment to the Church, they were prepared...
to involve theology in these discussions and to take it with complete critical seriousness.

Antoine Arjakovsky, in this magisterial survey of the history of Put’, has at last given the wider scholarly world the chance of absorbing and reflecting on this remarkable history. He traces numerous arguments through their various stages, with clarity and patience—the debates over what we might call “Russian exceptionalism” (what did it mean to believe that Russian identity was somehow spiritually distinct from that of other nations, more clearly marked by Providence?), over the possibilities of a Christian and Orthodox version of socialist politics, over the degree to which the Church could allow its agenda to be shaped by both local and global political realities, and much else. We can follow here the debates around the “Eurasian” movement, which attracted several significant figures for a time with its conviction that Russia could not simply look westwards for its cultural and spiritual future, before dissolving into irreparable conflicts. Very importantly, we can trace the fierce controversies about the distinctively Russian theology of Divine Wisdom, Sophia, with its roots partly in nineteenth-century Russian speculation and literature and partly in a wider world of Kabbalistic and hermetic imagery. The great Sergius Bulgakov had developed this theology in its most sophisticated form as a way of holding together insights about economics, art, politics, and doctrine, and Arjakovsky does full justice to the range of Bulgakov’s genius. But it suited some both in Moscow and elsewhere in the emigration to label this as heresy; and the ensuing controversy proved to be one of the most divisive and bitter in the history of the Paris community. We see also how the long shadow of fascism and the outbreak of war in 1939 affected the émigrés, and how, ultimately, the periodical came to an end in the face of the pressures of the German invasion: several of those who had been actively involved in Put’ were to offer the final and most effective kind of theological witness in the form of martyrdom at the hands of the Third Reich.

But in addition to a full and sympathetic account of all this, Arjakovsky adds an invaluable afterword about the retrieval of this heritage in the Russia of more recent times. From a very cautious admission that émigré thinking was not entirely a morass of counter-revolutionary mythology, Russian commentators came to see the world of Put’ more and more as a kind of ideal for intellectual renewal in the homeland. Sometimes this involved ignoring the contradictions and ambivalence of much of the
Parisian material; and there were plenty of voices to point out that there was still disagreement over the theological probity of some of the religious speculations to be found there. But there is no denying that the legacy of *Put’* was of great significance for countless younger thinkers and artists in Russia around the time of *perestroika* and in the 1990s; nor is it dead today. The first flush of enthusiastic reprinting of work by the Paris intellectuals passed quite quickly, but sustained scholarly engagement continues. And the reputation of some of the central figures involved in the periodical is growing rapidly among non-Russian thinkers and scholars: Bulgakov, to take only the most obvious example, has received more attention in the last ten to fifteen years than in the preceding half century.

Arjakovsky’s conclusion is that this particular style of weaving together the theological, the political, and the creative is more than ever necessary across the globe, not merely in a Russia that is once again struggling with whether it can manage democracy and transparency in governance. The sense of a vacuum in political and economic thinking throughout Europe and the North Atlantic world is recognized by believers and many secularists alike, and there is a widespread agreement that we must find the language for a renewed “humanistic” politics (in the sense of a politics attuned to the real capacities of the human spirit rather than to managerial, consumerist, and functionalist nostrums). In this welcome and deeply stimulating book (expertly translated and freshly updated), Professor Arjakovsky has offered a treasury of material for such fresh thinking, as well as telling a story of extraordinary intellectual adventure in the most challenging of circumstances.

Rowan Williams
*Archbishop of Canterbury*

*Lambeth Palace, February 2011*
A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

First of all, Antoine Arjakovsky is to be thanked for the enormous contribution that this study makes. It illumines a significant part of the history of the Russian emigration and its literature. More specifically, it holds up for us a diverse, often contentious group of scholars, teachers, and writers who struggled, almost a century ago, to bring the Christian tradition as experienced in the Eastern Church into conversation with Christians of the West. Today, we still find ourselves challenged to bring together the Church and the world, Christianity and culture. The creativity and openness of these thinkers remain very valuable to us. If I could sum up what they hold out, despite their profound disagreements, it is the idea that Christianity is a “living tradition,” not a finished, closed system. The Spirit, as one of the liturgical prayers puts it, “is everywhere, filling all things.”

This is a comprehensive, thorough, and demanding study that connects with many other issues, some of which the author touches upon, especially in the conclusion and in his afterword—the relationship of Russia to the rest of Europe and the world, the state of ecumenical work and relationships among the churches, and the quest for unity not only within the Orthodox churches but across the churches that confess Christ as Lord.

Jerry Ryan is to be thanked for a daunting task of translation. Natalia Ermolaev contributed mightily by correcting transliterations and translations. John Jillions provided a thorough reading and editing. At the University of Notre Dame Press, Rebecca DeBoer assumed the challenge of copyediting, and former press director Barbara Hanrahan was supportive from the first proposal of this project of translation. To these and others who assisted, many thanks.

Michael Plekon
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION
AND OTHER CONVENTIONS

The transliteration from Russian used here follows the Library of Congress system (without diacritical marks). Slight modifications have been made in the case of proper names for the sake of readability: the soft sign -ь- is omitted from proper names; the vowel modifier -й- is transcribed as -i- in first names ending in -ai or -ei (such as Nikolai, Sergei); -ий appears as -ii in first names (Dimitrii, Georgii; with the exception of “Evlogy”), but -y in last names (Troitsky, Mochulsky). Certain personal names with a standard English version deviate from this pattern, for example, Berdiaev (rather than Berdyaev), Sergius (rather than Sergei or Sergii) Bulgakov, George (rather than Georgii) Fedotov, Paul (rather than Pavel) Evdokimov, Georges (rather than Georgii) Florovsky, and Nicolas (rather than Nikolai) Zernov. Ecclesiastical names are generally rendered in their Greek or English, rather than Russian, variants: Sergius (not Sergii), Paisius (not Paisii), Theophanes (not Feofan), and Anthony (not Antonii). An important exception is Evlogy (rather than Eulogius).

All Cyrillic quotations are given in the new (post-1917) orthography.

Articles published in the Russian-language journal Put’ (The Way) are cited in the notes and occasionally in main text using the abbreviation system detailed in the References section at the back of the book, which contains a comprehensive listing, by author, of the articles published in The Way. Apart from minor alterations necessitated by the change from French to English transliterations of Russian authors’ names, the References list preserves the order and citation system of the original French edition. For example, the four articles published in The Way by Nikolai N. Afanasiev...
are identified in chronological order as A1, A2, A3, and A4, respectively; the article by A. A. Alexandrov is A5; the article by R. (Raymond) de Becker is B1; and so forth. A final letter "R," as in "A2R," indicates that the article in The Way is a review of another work.

The original French edition often translated original Russian titles into French for ease of reading. Similarly, many Russian titles have been translated here into English rather than preserving or restoring their original titles.

In addition, many of the texts cited and quoted here are English translations of French texts that originally appeared in Russian. While some effort was made to compare the English translation to the original Russian, this was not done exhaustively.
Introduction

This study has a threefold aim: to facilitate access to the prestigious journal Put', or The Way, which is still little known; to explain the resurgence of interest in it in Russia and France in the last decade; and, finally, to test my methodology, which attempts to elaborate a synthesis between the historical truth and the accuracy of memory. Before presenting a brief overview of The Way, I shall describe this three-pronged project in detail, using a primary definition of Russian religious thought as a means of delimiting my field of investigation.

THE PROJECT AND ITS BACKGROUND

The State of Research on The Way

The Way: A Journal of Russian Religious Thought, a journal in the Russian language, was published quarterly in Paris from 1925 to 1940 by the Academy of Religious Philosophy, directed by Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev. Scholars ranging from the French Slavist Pierre Pascal, who described the sixty-one issues of The Way as “uncommonly substantial,” to the American-based historian of the Russian emigration, Marc Raef, who stressed its “high level of erudition,” have agreed that the journal is one of the most brilliant in all Russian intellectual history. The French theologian Olivier Clément remarked that, thanks to Berdyaev’s The Way, Orthodox thought untiringly increased its awareness of French thought on...
similar subjects and, testing itself, grew more profound. Though the journal was held in high esteem by several eminent specialists in Russian philosophy, it remained little known in France and the USSR for different reasons until the early 1990s.

As for its obscurity in France, this can be explained by the fact that only six articles (out of 606), written by Berdyaev and Lev Shestov, were translated into French in the interwar period. Moreover, when they were published in French there was no reference to The Way, as their publishers wanted to present them as “new” texts. Thus, Berdyaev’s “The Truth and Lies of Communism” appeared in the first issue of Emmanuel Mounier’s journal Esprit (October 1932) and helped set its nonconformist tone, with no mention of its prior publication in The Way. After World War II, another twenty articles from The Way, by Berdyaev, Shestov, Sergius Bulgakov, Mother Maria Skobtsova, and Georges Florovsky, appeared in French, but that was all. If the Francophone public had no opportunity to hear of the journal, the Russian reading public in France likewise had very limited access to it. In fact, except for three research libraries—the Bibliothèque Nationale, the library of the St. Sergius Institute, and the Turgenev Library—one cannot find a complete run of The Way in France.

At present, there is not a single monograph on The Way. There does exist a general index of the publications of the YMCA Press between 1941 and 1956, compiled by Fedor Pianov, which includes a chronological index of the issues of The Way. The latter was published in France by the Russian-American YMCA publishing house. In 1986, the Russian Academic Group, which held its meetings in the 1930s at the editorial office of The Way and later took refuge in the United States, commissioned A. P. Obolensky to prepare a subject index to The Way. It was published in New York that same year, prefaced by a three-page introduction.

In 1990, Marc Raeff, himself a son of Russian émigrés in Paris in the interwar period, devoted six pages to The Way in his Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration (1919–1939). This is the first brief but comprehensive presentation of the journal. Raeff’s working hypothesis is that the Russian émigrés, who were knit together by their shared emotional experience of the Russian Revolution, formed a homogeneous society. This justifies a sociopolitical analysis of its origins, character, and cultural dynamics. Despite the many rifts within it, in Raeff’s view, the Russian émigrés of the interwar period were politically, culturally, and psy-
chologically united. He recalls that two main questions hammered at the émigré consciousness, from New York to Vladivostok: "What brought on the Revolution? What is the future of the Communist system?" Clearly more interested in the sociopolitical aspects of the emigration than the intellectual ones,9 Raeff calls The Way "the most significant religious journal of the Russian emigration . . . representing the best that émigré life had to offer."10

In the USSR, only the few individuals who were called upon to combat the emigration ideologically had access to The Way. It was kept in the special collections of the Communist Party, such as the Literary Archives of the Lenin Library in Moscow. Several issues of the journal turned up in Moscow during the “Thaw” and circulated secretly, primarily through ecclesiastical channels.11 The first real discovery of The Way took place in 1992, when the journal Moskva, through the Inform Progress Publishers, issued a reprint of the first six issues (September 1925 to January 1927) in 50,000 copies. In the hyperinflation of 1992–93 the publishing house, which had collected subscriptions to publish further issues of The Way, went bankrupt. Thus, republication of The Way in Russia was interrupted. The complete run of the journal was finally made available in 1993, when Militsa Zernov, widow of Nicolas Zernov, a principal contributor, bequeathed her husband’s library to the Moscow Library of Foreign Literature, directed by Ekaterina Geneva. Until 1988, the Center for Religious Literature of the Russian Emigration, along with the Museum of the Russian Emigration (founded by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Nikita Struve), was the principal place where the public could have access to The Way. Thanks to the journal’s significance, to the desire of many researchers from the former USSR to gain access to it, and finally, to the initiative of Professor F. Poliakov (a Russian émigré living in Munich), who collaborated with the Moscow Patriarchate to resume the republication begun in 1992, the entire journal was published (in Russian) on a CD-ROM in 1998. The CD-ROM included a twenty-one page introduction, “Grains of a Unique Bread: An Index of the Articles and Publications of The Way,” by the priest Boris Danilenko, director of the Library of the Holy Synod in Moscow. The Synodal Library received the blessing of the Patriarch of Moscow, Alexii II, whose personal endorsement graces the cover of the CD-ROM: “I deem it indispensable for theological schools to have copies of The Way as it fills the gaps in our theological thought caused by the Revolution.”12

© 2013 University of Notre Dame
Produced with the cooperation of the publisher Martis and the American Business Forms Company, this reprint of The Way was envisioned as the first in a series of Russian reprints on CD-ROMs, intended to include (using English translations of their titles) “The Encyclopedia of Orthodox Theology (1901–1911),” “Russian Theologians and Church Historians of the Emigration,” “The Journals of Theological Academies in Russia,” and “The Greek and Slavic Archives of the Library of the Holy Synod.” Since there are no copyright restrictions on The Way, one can imagine that in just a few years the journal will be widely accessible to scholars from Moscow to Kiev to Paris. A case in point already is Yakov Krotov’s website, www.krotov.info.13

Thus, although it enjoyed great intellectual prestige, The Way was largely unknown in the West and the East for many years. I want to present, for the first time, a synthesis of the articles it contained, while also providing a historical context to facilitate access not only for specialists but also for the wider public, who will now be able to consult this brilliant journal.

The Way: A Locus of Memory

Shortly after the creation of The Way in 1925, but, more importantly, from its final issue in 1940 up to Russian independence in 1991, it became a “locus of memory.” Pierre Nora defines this phrase as follows:

Above all, a locus of memory presupposes the straddling of two orders of reality: 1) a tangible, palpable reality, at times material, at others, less so, that is inscribed in space, time, language, and tradition; and 2) a purely symbolic reality, bearing history... Thus a locus of memory is any meaningful unity of the material or ideal order which is transformed — through human intention and thanks to the effects of time — into the memorial patrimony of a certain community.14

Although The Way is inscribed into the place and time of the Paris emigration of the interwar period, it is also very much a symbolic reality for the descendants of this emigration in the West, as it is for intellectuals, clergy, and politicians of the new Russia after 1991. I will analyze the evolution of memory in the journal at the end of this study, but my interest
here is to explain the journal’s symbolic dimension and its relevance to the present day. As “an organ of Russian religious thought” in the collective memory, The Way has become a reference point for a generation of intellectuals sharing a particular history. The myth of the émigré religious intelligentsia—it is fitting to speak of myth when narratives vary as a function of different memory communities—is more or less the following.15 (This narrative story of mine, which I present in italics, is in the genre of a memoir. I have carefully kept inaccuracies and imprecisions characteristic of mythic discourse.)

In the beginning, meaning at the end of the nineteenth century, several Russian intellectuals (today some claim that they were of Ukrainian or Baltic origin), concerned with finding authenticity and truth [pravdaistina] (without making a distinction between the two), looked to the West, broke with their ancestral ancient faith, and became Marxists. After a turbulent period marked by arrests, incarceration, and scholarly work, these intellectuals—under the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche, Arthur Rimbaud, and Immanuel Kant—experienced a profound crisis and became idealists. Then—under the influence of Vladimir Solovyov, the church fathers, and Fyodor Dostoevsky—they returned like prodigal sons to the bosom of the Church and became true patriots. In their collection “Landmarks” [Vekhi], they criticized their erstwhile revolutionary confreres for separating speculative truth [umozritel’naia istina] from practical truth [prakticheskaia pravda]. But their warning went unheeded. A series of catastrophes was unleashed upon Russia: war, revolution, civil war. Lenin, striving to get rid of his old enemies, spared them at the last minute and sent them into exile. In 1922, as their ship left the Baltic port, the intellectuals looked out onto the horizon and watched the storm clouds gathering over Russia. So began their long “way of the cross,” marked by poverty, division, homesickness, and Western intellectuals’ failure to understand the uniqueness of Russian philosophy. But the Russian intellectuals did not sit idly by; they took advantage of the freedoms offered by their adoptive countries. After the 1923 Congress of Psherov, where they experienced “a veritable descent of the Holy Spirit,” the older generation of intellectuals was reborn as they united with the younger émigrés. And then together they created a truly prophetic movement, which had no analogue since the establishment of
the Byzantine “symphony” of power in the fourth century, and which aimed for the liberation of the Church from state authority, the churching of one’s entire life [votserkovenie vsei zhizni], and, finally, “bringing the meaning of the icon to the West.” Opposing military counter-revolutionary activity on religious grounds, these intellectuals were fully resolved—like the Jews in Babylonian exile—to prepare Russia’s future through a spiritual and cultural renaissance. Gathering around institutions of higher learning, initiating a youth movement, publishing house, and a journal, they opened up a brilliant page in Russian intellectual history by publishing numerous philosophical treatises, theological works, and even novels. But the “Paris School,” as this movement later came to be known, was too audacious. This audacity—and particularly the sophiological teachings—was severely reprimanded when some Russian bishops condemned sophiological doctrine as heresy. When World War II broke out, these Russian intellectuals fought heroically against the occupiers, always sustaining prayers for Russia under German invasion. The story ends tragically. At the end of their lives, some fell victim to the “devastating illness of Soviet patriotism.” Having devoted so many years to spiritual struggle, they all died, like Moses, without entering the Promised Land.

This myth or “little memoir,” as Alain Brossat has called it, which is not about institutions, suddenly became the center of attention in the 1980s.16 Georges Nivat, citing V. Bolshakov’s 1990 work on the emigration, underscores the mythical conception of this emigration, like the myths of “the thirteenth tribe of Israel.”17 He writes: “The Russian emigration is not the only wave of displaced persons in the twentieth century, nor the only one to lead a miserable existence. But it is the only one to conceive of itself as a ‘New Israel,’ or a ‘New Mayflower,’ having taking away from its morally tainted homeland the elements of a moral renewal, just as the Puritans did when they fled Europe in the seventeenth century.”18 Memory, Nora states, is “the most vulnerable to all manner of manipulation,” and is marked by “long periods of quiescence and sudden moments of revitalization.”19 In general, one can say that if, in Russia, the end of the Soviet Union engendered an immense desire to find once more the thread of the pre-revolutionary national history that the emigration symbolized, in France the end of the political emigration—brought about by a liberated Russia—provoked in
the descendants of these intellectuals a profound desire to communicate the universal dimension of the intellectual, social, and ecclesiastical heritage of the writers of The Way.

As the witnesses to the noncommunist past disappeared, the memory of the emigration in the USSR and in Russia in 1989–91 passed from a negative connotation to a positive image. Vyacheslav Kostikov, a former diplomat who had worked in the French Embassy in Paris and who became Yeltsin’s spokesperson in 1991–93, published a book entitled Let Us Not Curse the Exiles (Ne budem proklinat’ ızgnanie) in a sizeable edition—100,000 copies. In it, the political and cultural life of the emigration was presented in the USSR in a relatively positive light for the first time. In the first chapter, “Memory Awakened,” the author recalls the episode of the “philosopher’s steamship” in typical nomenklatura style. Citing Fedor Stepun, one of the exiled thinkers and a contributor to The Way, Kostikov justifies his changed attitude towards the emigration by dividing it into two camps. He mentions those who were the last survivors of the old monarchist guard, who had learned nothing from the revolution or from emigration, the group Stepun pejoratively called emigrantshchina. “They rejected the future in the name of the past, but they were not numerous, those infected by the ‘emigrantshchina’ virus. It was not they who had determined the spiritual and cultural life of the emigration.”

Although this might be expressed differently, for a great many Russian intellectuals the rediscovery of the “spiritual and cultural life of the emigration” offered the hope of reestablishing a bond with the past and finding themselves in it. In the two-page preface to the republication of the first six issues of The Way in 1992, Aleksander Abramov, professor of philosophy at the Russian State Humanities University, stresses the “burning relevance” of its publication to the present moment in Russian life and announces that “this republication of The Way may well become a significant event in our spiritual life.”

That same year, a new journal called The Way was inaugurated in Moscow. Its goals were “to reveal and continue the intellectual tradition of the interwar generation and thus to foster the formation of a united intellectual space embracing the East and the West.” The journal’s editor-in-chief was Anatolii Yakovlev (son of Aleksander Yakovlev, ideological adviser to the Politburo in 1988–91). The younger Yakovlev, in his capacity as editor of Problems of Philosophy (Voprosy filosofii) in 1989–92, had encouraged the broad dissemination of articles
and books on religious philosophy by émigré authors during the perestroika years. In his editorial in the first issue of the new journal, The Way, he writes:

The fact that we are living in a time of great social change is but subjective. Obviously, the house in which three generations of Russians have lived has collapsed before our eyes. But we have survived. And the only thing we still have is our inner spiritual life. . . . Now that the conversation about our circumstances or the interior movements of the spirit has begun, it has become possible to philosophize. . . . A very rich tradition exists, from the pre- and post-revolutionary years, which may remain inaccessible. . . . We must rediscover this tradition, and then hope for the miracle of its eventual transformation into an original living philosophy. 23

Finally, from the clergy, Fr. Danilenko’s introduction to the republication of The Way on the CD-ROM is most insightful. Later on I will analyze the “deformations of memory” in this introduction in some detail, as well as the precious insights these distortions give us into the present state of religious consciousness in Russia. Here, I merely repeat Fr. Danilenko’s conclusion, from April 5, 1998, which addresses the power and feeling of indebtedness towards the past that certain clerics feel as they rejoin the profound movement of the whole of contemporary Russian society:

Ste. Geneviève-des-Bois, Tegel, Olchany . . . those cemeteries abroad and still others became the final refuge for the contributors to The Way. Why did such a long and sorrowful voyage have to end in burial far from the homeland? “Truly, truly I say to you, if a seed of grain falls into the earth and dies not, it remains alone; if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).

In the memory of the emigration, The Way is looked upon similarly, as a conduit from the past to the future, both on the intellectual level and on the political and religious ones. Raeff points out that the need to forge a unity with the old Russia is evident in the very name of the journal, a name taken over from an illustrious pre-revolutionary publishing house. The cultural unity of the emigration crystallized for Raeff in that name. “In these different expressions,” he wrote, “the word ‘way’ was the guarantor of
Russian cultural identity and the most important element in the intelligentsia’s consciousness. In émigré literature it became even more important for the collective identity as language was the most obvious sign of membership in a specific group.”

Thus, the use of the pre-revolutionary orthography in the journal was profoundly symbolic. Nikita Struve, the French academic and son of the Russian emigration, and director of the YMCA Press (the main publisher of Berdyaev’s journal), published a work entitled *Seventy Years of the Russian Emigration (1919–1989)* in 1996, in which he follows up on the reflections of his American colleague. Struve writes that *The Way* played the same role as a rallying point and unifying force that *Contemporary Annals (Sovremennye zapiski)* played in the literary sphere. Looking back (with the benefit of hindsight), Struve takes note of the end of the emigration and foists a new task on its heirs. In his opinion, the emigration, “despite snares and dangers, fulfilled its mission by building a ‘Russia abroad’ which now forms one body with the Russia that is rising from the ruins, to help it cement itself to the Russia of tomorrow.”

Keeping the journal in memory is important not only for the Russian emigration. For Olivier Clément, a French intellectual who converted to Orthodoxy after reading the religious thought of members of the emigration, the legacy of *The Way* lay in the advent of an original philosophy that sought a synthesis between logic and “mytho-logic.” Unwieldy at times, these attempts at synthesis, if one carefully discerns them, are rich in potential for the future. In a chapter entitled “For a Future in Common,” from his 1997 book *Rome autrement*, Clément imagines a rapprochement between Bulgakov’s theology and ecology.

It is incumbent upon man, the priest of the world, to offer the spiritual essences of things to God in the Christian sacrifice of reintegration. We must give this transfiguring vision all its cultural and social import and enrich ecology with it. The great Russian sophiological thinkers attempted to do this early in the century. Their conceptualizations were, no doubt, clumsy, but we should reconsider their meditations on Wisdom—the mystery which is found above all in the eighth chapter of Proverbs in which God and the Creation appear mutually interpenetrating. Through Wisdom the old myths of the consecrated Earth can be integrated into Christianity as a kind of poetics of communion. And without doubt there is a mystical bond between Wisdom and the Mother of God in which earth at last finds a face.
According to Hélène d’Encausse, a French professor of Georgian origin, the rapprochement between Russian religious thought and modernity was of great political import. She describes the politicians and intellectuals grouped around Dimitrii Likhachev thus:

For this group the intellectual and philosophical heritage of the early twentieth century is so rich as to serve as a reference point for the Russia they were seeking. Berdyaev, Bulgakov, and Simeon Frank were philosophers who found an alternative to Marxism in Christian values. Though they had been unknown in the USSR, they could enrich a reemerging Russian thought. In this Christianity, the key thing for political culture was that there was no room, according to Likhachev, for intolerance and the exclusion of “others.”

Finally, for Michel Evdokimov, emeritus professor of literature in France, an Orthodox priest, and the son of the celebrated émigré intellectual Paul Evdokimov, the Orthodox heirs of the spiritual message of The Way must now turn resolutely towards the future as “messengers” or liaisons, making it their mission to Russia and the new democracies of the former USSR and the Orthodox countries in general, to help them integrate “what is best in modernity.” In a chapter entitled, characteristically, “Orthodoxy Faces the Future,” he writes:

In countries such as Russia, modernity is viewed negatively. Yet one wants to preserve its positive aspects. The same view is held in countries with a majority Orthodox population, such as Greece, countries situated just this side of the Iron Curtain. We have before us the enormous challenge to calm spirits, to avoid condemnations at sword point if not by the axe, of all that modernity bears with it, that is to say, the good and the bad.

Thus, what is at stake is a threefold process of discovery, precipitated by Russian religious thought. First, we must measure the political aspect of the present-day grafting of émigré ideas in the Soviet body politic. Even though it is not the main subject of this book, we must point out that it depends on the changes in the political regime in Russia; on the relations of the Orthodox Church with the state and the society; and finally, on the
The Project and Its Background

The evolution of the strategy of the Orthodox Church in Europe and the wider world.

The second matter at stake is of an intellectual order. Certain problems have remained suspended at the heart of Russian thought, and certain themes have reemerged regularly in publications without ever being integrated into the general culture, and they must be taken up again in the present. These are personalism, sophiology, and, more generally, the epistemological status of religious thought, to which I shall return in this introduction. On the other hand, what about the interest in Russia manifested by French professors and intellectuals? Is it simply a matter of fashion, or is it indicative of a genuine desire to do away with the intellectual partitioning of Europe into two camps? Is the thought of the Russian emigration a synthesis of German idealism and Byzantine patristic thought, condemned to remain “at the margins” of “religious philosophy”? Or do the current attempts of Ricoeur, Breton, or Yannaras permit us to envisage a single Europe from the Atlantic to Siberia? I do not claim to answer these questions definitively here, but I end with a discussion of the present integration of Russian philosophy in universities and other institutions of higher learning in the new Russia.

Finally, the third matter at stake concerns the church itself. As Constantine Andronikov has written, the emergence of a body of modern Orthodox thought for the first time since St. Gregory Palamas (14th c.) has major consequences for the level of ecumenism as well as the practical life of the world’s 200 million Orthodox Christians. Whether it be the issue of the contemporary reform of the World Council of Churches, founded in part by some of the writers of The Way, or the matter of the reform of the liturgical language for tens of millions of believers who can no longer pray in Slavonic, or the secularization of the majority of Orthodox countries of Europe—all these issues are not without consequence. Yet, here again, the contribution to these debates in this volume will be to highlight as succinctly and faithfully as possible those “time bombs” that the contributors to The Way left in their wake.

An Adapted Methodology

It is fair to say that the tragic tale of the Russian intellectual generation put forward above is a “poeticization,” which bears little relation to the
historical reality of the journal and its collaborators. If Bulgakov, son of a line of six generations of priests, could lose his faith upon reading *Das Kapital*, his Parisian colleague at the St. Sergius Institute, Lev Zander, was always faithful to his childhood religion, which he maintained from St. Petersburg to the Côte d’Azur. Simeon Frank was also expelled from Russia in the philosophers’ boat, but Shestov simply took the Geneva-Paris train in 1923. Not all religious thinkers left Russia, as the examples of Alexei Losev and Pavel Florensky attest. Of the collaborators in the renowned *Landmarks* collection, only three went on to write in *The Way*.

The “state of grace” achieved at the Congress of Psherov lasted only three years. In 1926, the Serbian Brotherhood abandoned the “movement.” Without the aid of Protestant organizations such as the YMCA, the World Student Christian Federation, or the Anglican Church, the emigration would have been a flash in the pan. The lack of mutual comprehension between Russian and French intellectuals was a further factor. Nevertheless, Berdyaev’s oeuvre was translated into more than fifteen languages in the period in question. The “Paris School” thought it had a common center, embracing many mutually opposing currents.33 Certain contributors, such as Mother Maria Skobtsova, did in fact give their lives in the name of freedom during the War, but others simply departed for the United States, or for Germany, to collaborate during the Russian Campaign of 1941 with the Wehrmacht’s propaganda machine. It is true that the great historian of Russian religiosity, George Fedotov, is buried in New York State, but Lev Karsavin died somewhere in the Gulag and is buried in Siberia.

One could cite many other half-truths evoked by memory. Of course, such minor details seem insignificant against the background of the great adventure called “the ways of Russian theology,” as in the title of Florovsky’s 1936 work, or “the Russian idea,” as in Berdyaev’s title in 1946, or even “the Russian religious renaissance of the twentieth century,” as in the title of Zernov’s book of 1963. All three wrote in *The Way*, but one could add the essays of others as well—Vasilii Zenkovsky, Nikolai Lossky, Fedotov, or Mother Maria Skobtsova—these authors resumed on their own the legend of a great tradition of interrupted national thought, of which they were the last blooms. Attempting to raise memory to the level of the sacred, they were unable to free it of many very prosaic details.

Given this situation, the question of scholarly method arises and, more generally, that of “truth in history.” Convinced that truth in history is al-