

The present text, "*Astride the Abyss of War and Revolutions: Articles 1914-1922*" represents 1st English translation and publication of an extensive sbornik/collection of 98 articles (numerically, about 20% of the total corpus of his works) by the eminent Russian religious philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev, regarding societal, political, cultural and religious matters, which remain of great continuing critical importance for our modern world.

The historical period covered spans Russia's entry into WWI, the challenges of upholding the war effort, the collapse of the Old Regime under the rot of Rasputinism, and the subsequent two 1917 "Russian Revolutions". First was the "February Revolution", the inherently unstable attempt by wartime Russia to create a democratic republic under Kerensky's Provisional Government, a brief moment of freedom, of "freedom of the word and thought", which in turn was undermined by ideological societal agitation for an ever continued "deepening of the Revolution", not merely political but societal. Berdyaev argues that there can be no true "social revolution" without a radical inner transformation of the human person; revolution as such is destructively non-creative a process and but reflects a continuation of the old poison under new guises. Russia under the revolutionary fervour merely replaced Rasputin with Lenin, and the pogrom-minded Black Hundredists mentality with a pogrom-minded Red Hundredists mentality...

The second 1917 "Russian Revolution", the "October Revolution", occurred with Lenin's Bolshevik-Marxist coup. Our text hints at rumours, even then, of Germany's hand in foisting Lenin upon Russia to sabotage the war effort. Instead of freedom, Lenin's Communism proclaimed a "dictatorship of the proletariat". There is a truism that revolutions ultimately devour their makers, whether in 1939 under Stalin, or in the century long revolutionary movements in Russia that saw their ultimate climax and demise in these years of bloody anarchy and Civil War.

From our text, we can detect a growing cloud of darkness descending upon "freedom of the word" in Russia, as the Communists consolidate control with closure of presses throughout

1918 and thereafter. Berdyaev's thought turns to the cultural significance of the Renaissance, to the collaborative "*Oswald Spengler and the Decline of Europe*", to the fate of the embattled Russian Orthodox Church and fidelity to the Moscow Patriarchate. Much of Berdyaev's writings of this later period will be published only abroad, with his 1922 banishment from Russia, -- such as his fiery tome, "*The Philosophy of Inequality*"...

Our present text may be considered part of the current Centenary interest into WWI, the "Great War", and its tragic aftermath of residual effects, which have continued through subsequent traumatic events to quake the quietude of modern life. Amidst the foppish dreams of the "dormant powers of man" are the forlorn dashed hopes of so tragically many...

As in the dynamics of any classical tragedy, and gifted with historical hindsight, we are beset with the paralysis of terror at the impending fated disasters that are to ensue, and thus share in the healing process of catharsis. Berdyaev has proactive and creative an understanding of the Russian religio-philosophic theme of "God-manhood", grounded upon the ontological concept of person, in authentic freedom at spiritual a depth. Berdyaev's sympathy with the thought of N. F. Fedorov suggests a "Memory Eternal" to all who have perished, that their lives and struggles have not been in vain, and opens a path to transcend the alienation within modern man.

The "Table of Contents" for the present text, as well as for other books under the imprint of "frsj Publications", may be found at the website [berdyaev.com](http://berdyaev.com), qv. This is another in our series of providing primary texts of Russian Religious Philosophy in 1st English translation.