



# The Fate of Russia

*Nicholas Berdyaev*

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## **The Fate of Russia** Nicholas Berdyaev

1st English Translation from Russian: "The Fate of Russia" is an insightful book by the eminent Russian religious philosopher, Nicholas Berdyaev (1874-1948). There is an "irony of fate" regarding the book in its "untimely" timeliness -- a collection of WWI related articles from 1914-1916, it was published in 1918 only after the Russian Communist 1917 Revolution and Russia's subsequent dropping out of the war, but before the total closure of independent presses.

Thus, "untimely" at the moment of its appearance, it is at present quite "timely" as regards an understanding of the enigmatic visage of post-Soviet Russia for the world. Berdyaev was banished from Russia by the Communists in 1922, a "forbidden author" during the Soviet period.

"The Fate of Russia" is divided into five segments, the first exploring the psychology of the "Russian Soul," the vastness of the Russian Land, a great East-West historically conflicted between its European and Asiatic-Mongol inheritance, the choice, as expressed by Vl. Solov'ev, between Xerxes or Christ. In separate articles, Berdyaev writes also of the French, the Germans and the Polish.

WWI proved to be the "graveyard of empires," spawning further historical nightmares into our own time. Like Spengler, Berdyaev had presentiments of the "End of Europe," which in modern a perspective has seemed a slow-motion spiritual and cultural collapse, like the slow fading away of the Roman Empire. In our own time, particularly acute has become the question whether the nation state has become obsolete, to be subsumed and replaced by ideological concerns. Berdyaev addresses various aspects of "nationalness," its various guises.

We live increasingly in a world of mass society beset by a totalitarian stifling of and intrusion upon the person, by both technology and the state. Two of Berdyaev's articles in the final segment speak of "Spirit and the Machine," and "Democracy and the Person." Other articles address the contrast between words and reality in societal life, its political abstractive manifestations and the conventional lie.

Throughout all his many writings over his lifetime, Berdyaev was a champion of authentic freedom of the person at spiritual and creative a depth, innate to the dignity of the person, the freedom of conscience, a responsible freedom not bestowed by some whatever social concordat. For both Russia and the modern world, it remains the choice between the barbaric totalitarianism of Xerxes, or the innate freedom preached by Christ.

This is the first appearance of Berdyaev's current tome, "The Fate of Russia," in the English language. It represents yet another hitherto unavailable work within the continuing series of our efforts at translation of primary texts in Russian Religious Philosophy.

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