EDITORIAL FOREWORD

This volume inaugurates a Special Series in Contemporary Russian Philosophy (CRP). This Special Series focuses on the philosophy emerging in the Russian Federation, not on pre-Soviet philosophy or immediate post-Soviet philosophy, because nineteenth-century Russian religious thought and twentieth-century Soviet political ideology do not provide the proper reference point for understanding the philosophy now being done in Russia. To promote a more adequate understanding, each volume of CRP explores perspectives in and on philosophy as currently practiced in Russia. This Special Series features collaborative works between Russians and Americans, collections of chapters by Russians, and monographs by Russians. All volumes are published in English.

The present volume is a collaborative project between Russians and Americans. The chapters developed from a series of Roundtables on “Democratization in Russia” conducted over a four year period at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and in Moscow at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences. A Scholar Exchange Agreement had been reached between these two institutions at the end of the 1980s. This exchange was one of only a few retained by the Institute of Philosophy during the transitions following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. These Roundtables were, in part, an attempt to grapple with the critical societal issues that had to be addressed immediately in Russia. Specifically, the Roundtables focused on difficulties facing the Russian Federation in the development of democratic policies and practices.

All of the Russian contributors to this volume are or have been associated with the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow, and all but one of the American contributors is affiliated with UNC Charlotte. These Roundtables involved many more papers than are represented here. This selection from the best papers presents a balanced and integrated perspective of views by Russian and American political theorists on democracy, especially in Russia, and its relation to issues of justice. The chapters in this book were edited by me and Tatiana Alekseeva. This volume is our second co-edited volume. We have also co-authored a prior volume. Reginald Raymer, the Assistant Editor of this Special Series, has prepared the Introduction. Finally, Ambassador Jack Perry prepared a special Preface for this inaugural volume of Contemporary Russian Philosophy. We are especially grateful for the insights and support of this distinguished diplomat who served in the American Embassy in Moscow during the early 1960s and later as U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria. Following his “retirement,” he directed International Studies at Davidson College and then at UNC Charlotte.

Through a special arrangement with the Russian Philosophical Society, some of the future volumes of CRP will be drawn from the best papers presented at the national meetings of the Russian Congress of Philosophy. The first was held in St. Petersburg in summer of 1998, and the second was held in Ekaterinburg in summer of 1999. Another volume is being planned with the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. The possibilities are legion and exciting. This Special Series will demonstrate the originality, vitality, and relevance
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of the scholarly writings being produced by the Russian philosophical community.

In undertaking this publishing venture, the CRP Special Series is pleased to have co-sponsors in both the United States and Russia. The co-sponsors are the Center for Professional and Applied Ethics at UNC Charlotte and the Russian Philosophical Society. The Center for Professional and Applied Ethics is the largest such center in the southeastern United States. The Center, which maintains a variety of on-going regional endeavors, already sponsors one national professional organization. Now, the Center is moving into international arenas, including research endeavors, which it is beginning with this volume. The Russian Philosophical Society is the largest professional organization of philosophers in Russia and is the successor within the Russian Federation of the Soviet Philosophical Society that existed in the U.S.S.R. In many ways, the Russian Philosophical Society is the counterpart in Russia of the American Philosophical Association in the United States.

In my efforts as Editor of CRP, I will be joined by an Assistant Editor, Reginald Raymer, who along with me is in the Philosophy Department at UNC Charlotte. We will be served as well by the distinguished Editorial Board of CRP which is composed of prominent Russian philosophers and of American philosophers with long-standing involvements in Russian philosophy. The members of the Editorial Board are Tatiana Alekseeva, Ruben Apressyan, Alexander Chumakov, Robert Holmes, Alexandre Mikheev, and James Sterba. Alekseeva, who is co-editor of this volume, is Head of the Department of Political Theory at Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was formerly the Head of the Department of Political Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow and has been a Visiting Professor at UNC Charlotte. Apressyan is Head of the Department of Ethics at the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow and has been a Visiting Professor at Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, Canada. Chumakov is the First Vice President of the Russian Philosophical Society and has lectured at several universities in the United States. Holmes is a Professor in the Philosophy Department at the University of Rochester and has been Rajif Gandhi Professor of Peace and Disarmament at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. Mikheev, formerly Associate Professor in the Department of the Art and Craft of Translation at the Moscow Foreign Languages Institute, now resides in the United States and is a Professor in the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. Sterba is Professor in the Philosophy Department at the University of Notre Dame, USA and is also a Faculty Fellow of the Institute for International Peace Studies at that university. Both Holmes and Sterba have lectured many times in Moscow and other cities in Russia and Eastern Europe, and Mikheev returns regularly to Russia to pursue professional activities.

Democracy and the Quest for Justice: Russian and American Perspectives is a timely first volume in this new Special Series and will make a valuable addition to the Value Inquiry Book Series (VIIB), published by Editions Rodopi, B. V., for which Robert Ginsberg is the Founding Editor. We thank Ginsberg and the Associate Editors of VIIB for their support of this new Special Series. In
You Can’t Go Home Again, Thomas Wolfe said of America, “I think the true
discovery of America is before us... I think the true discovery of our own democ­
cracy is still before us.” The Editors and Editorial Board of CRP believe that
the same can be said of Russia at the beginning of the new millennium. For the
foreseeable future, Russia and most other countries will continue to struggle
with the proper structuring of the democratic state, especially in relation to is­
sues of political and economic justice. This first volume of CRP takes up basic
questions about the relation of democracy to justice. Subsequent volumes will
continue the philosophical exploration of global problems facing humanity.

William Gay
Editor
Contemporary Russian Philosophy

Notes


2. William Gay and T.A. Alekseeva, Capitalism With a Human Face: The Quest for a Middle Road in Russian Politics (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Little­
field, 1995).

3. Thomas Wolfe, You Can’t Go Home Again (New York: Dell Publish­