

**MAN AND THE CHURCH
IN THE CHRISTIAN THOUGHT OF NICHOLAS BERDYAEV**

An international scholarly conference on the 150th anniversary of the philosopher's birth

Workshop

Berdyaev and Pushkin: The Sources and Meaning of the Russian Renaissance

6 March, 2024

N. A. Berdyaev, with his typical subtlety and sensitivity to the action of the spirit and to mysticism, called the creative boom in early 20th-century Russia a “Renaissance in Spiritual Culture”. He associated this phenomenon with the appearance of a new type of human being, who is “more directed towards and attentive to inner life”, with a turn from exclusive interest in materialism, utilitarianism, and atheism, and with a new interest in revealing life's “otherworldly” aspects. In terms of its gravitation towards freedom (will), the sanctity of creativity, and beauty, “The Russian Renaissance” might be compared to the golden era of Pushkin and heralds a transition to a new and different type of culture. This new type of culture is characterized by “the awakening of religious anxiety” and the urge to “move beyond the boundaries of art and literature”.

Berdyaev draws a distinction between this philosophical (intellectual) renaissance and the literary-aesthetic renaissance, noting the complex nature of the former's sources, which include the 19th c. Russian religious-philosophy (A. Khomyakov, V. Solovyov) as well as its foundations in Christianity, Orthodoxy, German thought, “Russian Marxism”, and Russian literature (particularly F. Dostoyevsky and L. Tolstoy).

We invite you to join our conversation on the Russian cultural renaissance in this workshop, which will focus on its sources, meaning, issues and achievements.

Moderators:

Yulia Valentinovna Balakshina, PhD in Philology, Professor at SFI and Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia

Lydia Vladimirovna Kroshkina, PhD Candidate in Cultural Studies, Senior Lecturer at SFI and Russian State University for the Humanities

Questions for Discussion:

1. Can the golden era of Pushkin be considered the beginning of the Russian “Renaissance in Spiritual Culture” that took place in the early 20th century? What do the two phenomena have in common?
2. What issues raised in Russian literature are taken up by religious-philosophical thought in the early 20th c.? What answers were produced?
3. What is the meaning of the “renaissance” that Berdyaev writes about – both for Russian history and for world culture, in general? What meaning does it have for our contemporary times?