

### A. N. Kruglov. Kant's philosophy in Russia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century

Russian philosophy, being not completely autonomous, undoubtedly has a great originality both thematically and structurally. But there is a temptation, which many modern scholars of Russian thought simply can not resist to – the temptation of dogmatism. Hiding behind hermeneutics, ideas, empathy and intuitive comprehension of the truth, it is too tempting to create a cheap popular image for yourself, leaving outside the scope of anything that does not match. A method here is quite simple and consists in the opposition of Russian philosophy and philosophy in Russia. This idea, in some cases quite fruitful, is often transformed into an instrument of philosophical censorship: everything that does not fit our concepts and models is announced to be secondary, derivative, or marginal. That is how they dispose of Russian positivism, Marxism, and other manifestations of secular philosophizing.

But the most dramatic developments were with the Russian fate of Kant. Both his demonization and his deification clearly show a deep and sincere feeling living in the heart of a researcher, but they say almost nothing about the fate of the Kantian philosophy in Russia. It seems that now we know everything about the perception of Kant by the Russian public: anti-Kant anthologies directly confirm this. But the paradox is that besides these emotional and not always fair attacks made by many researchers, there is almost nothing more provided. Instead of the historical and philosophical investigation, we are often presented essays, which are convincing mainly in terms of the artistic merits of the text, but not of the facts.

All said above should be taken into account in order to correctly estimate the value of the work done by A. N. Kruglov. His study, phenomenally detailed and accurate, is devoted to Kant – one of the most mythologized by the Russian thought philosophers. And these myths, probably expressing certain features of Russian philosophy in the past, are uncritically transferred to modern science, claiming the status of objective knowledge.

The first thing that should be noted is exceptional completeness of the study. Despite the seeming vastness of the topic, the author managed to avoid the temptation of considering only the most juicy stories, leaving the speculative possibility to accomplish the work begun by him for hypothetical successors. It is clear that there are no perfect texts, but as of today the book "Kant's philosophy in Russia at the end of the 18th century" is the most detailed and complete study of the issue, largely covering the topic.

The book by A. N. Kruglov discusses the relationship that directly connected Kant with Russia (Chapters: 1. The Seven Years' War Period (p. 17–48); 2. Kant and the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences (p. 49–53); 3. Russian evidence of Kant (p. 54–87); 4. Correspondence Kant with the Russians... (p. 88–110)).

It is particularly interesting in the study how the Russian public acquainted with the philosophy of Kant and how it is reflected in the teaching of philosophy in Russian universities (Chapters: 5. Kant's manuscripts kept in Russia (p. 111–112); 6. First translations of Kant into Russian (p. 113–117); 7. First works about Kant in Russia (p. 118–143); 8. Kant in Russian universities (p. 144–131); 9. Kant in the disputes of early Westernizers and Slavophiles (p. 332–338)). Speaking separately about the part of the work, which is devoted to the fate of Kant's philosophy in Russian universities, it should be noted that it does not get lost among other quite detailed studies in this area. The fates of supporters and

opponents of Kant's philosophy in Moscow, Kazan, St. Petersburg, Kharkov, Tartu and Vilnius universities are examined carefully and in detail. The history of Kant in Russian universities is given involving rich historical and biographical material: the author of the monograph specifically examined about 70 characters. By the way, the readers of the "Kantovsky Sbornik" had an opportunity to estimate the manner of historical and philosophical work of A.N. Kruglov not long ago (the article in the second issue of 2010 "Early Kantianism in Russia: J.W.L. Mellmann and J.G. Buhle").

The part of the book, which deals with the reaction the Kantian philosophy in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev Theological Academies (Chapter 10. Kant in Russian theological academies (p. 339–470)), can be considered as a continuation of this story.

Special attention should be given to the largely methodological digression explaining the perception of Kantian philosophy on Russian soil (Chapter 11. Pre-Kantian interpretation of the notion of the transcendental in Russia (p. 471–486)).

The work is finalized with a conclusion (Some results (p. 487–497)), where the author summarizes the results of the research.

Firstly, it is noted that the attitude to Kant and Kantian philosophy in Russia was complex and ambiguous, and the perception of critical philosophy was hard and uneven, heavily influenced by external and quite random factors.

The author divides the spreading of Kant's philosophy in Russia in certain stages. A.N. Kruglov connects the first contact of the Russian public with the philosophy of Kant with the names of Mellmann and Schaden, with positive reviews by Karamzin and the first translations of Kant's works into Russian.

The second wave is associated with the names of such German professors as Buhle, Reinhard, Fessler or Schad, "but it did not make a serious progress in mastering Kant's philosophy" (p. 487).

The third wave of interest in the philosophy of Kant A.N. Kruglov connects with the names of Russian professors (Kunitsyn, Galich, Solntsev), whose activity, however, was nullified by external circumstances (activities of Magnitsky and Runich).

Basing on a detailed study the author affirms that "it is impossible to estimate unambiguously the level of familiarity of the Russians with Kant's philosophy at the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries" (p. 488). It is also noted that with the development of higher education in Russia there formed different approaches to the interpretation of Kant's philosophy. The perception of Kant in Kharkov, Moscow, Kazan, St. Petersburg and Kiev had its peculiarities: "For example, in Kharkov they were more interested in the "Critique of Pure Reason" and the problem of antinomies as well as in scientific problems in relation to critical philosophy, while in Kazan they paid more attention to Kantian ethics and Kantian-oriented law. Moscow, which was the first hearth and the center of Kantianism in Russia as early as in the 18th century, began turning into the periphery of Russian Kantianism in the middle of the 19th century; and it mainly focused on Kant's aesthetics. St. Petersburg has long been distinguished for the most unrestrained and accusatory attitude to Kant's philosophy, while Kiev almost from the very beginning was characterized by restraint and greater objectivity in terms of criticism" (p. 489).

The number of sources quoted and used by A.N. Kruglov in his work is also impressive (bibliography and list of references is almost 60 pages); they confirm virtually every thesis and every proposition of the author. Practicing almost German pedantry in work with the sources, the author brings a discussion of the

fate of Kant's philosophy in Russia on another historical and philosophical level. This does not mean that his opponents would have nothing to say: any possible controversy should now require more serious arguments because, on the one hand, it is extremely difficult, but on the other, it is necessary to keep a high level of academic debate.

The author of the study shows that the image of Kant in Russian philosophy had many faces and was ambiguous: his is cursed as *a jailer, a philosopher of despair*, whose speech *freezes all alive*; but there was another Kant in the Russian thought – *a famous sage and a teacher of the mind*. And in many respects he expresses what is principally important for Russian philosophy.

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