"Man without quotes" and "gentleman with a mocking face" in the "Crystal Palace": Concerning A.A. Borovoy's unpublished manuscript, "Dostoevsky"

Petr Ryabov*

At the beginning of the 20th century, the world's interest in the work of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky was growing. It was becoming clear that his writing contained - if not answers, then key questions for that time, and that Dostoevsky was not only a writer, but also a philosopher, and that it was impossible to understand the catastrophic experience of the present without recourse to his ideas. Important studies published by, amongst others, L.I. Shestov, N.A. Berdyaev, V.V. Rozanov, N.O. Lossky, D.S. Merezhkovsky, and M.M. Bakhtin reflected a growing "existentialist" trend in philosophy inspired by his work. However, subsequently, in the early years of the USSR, emerging totalitarianism initiated an ideological campaign casting this "reactionary" writer as the progenitor of "Dostoevshchina." Dostoevsky's ideas were then addressed, mainly, by emigre religious thinkers living in exile from Russia. As for the Soviet Union, there Communist Party overseers of culture denounced Dostoevsky, creating a caricatural image of a clerical and anti-revolutionary, semi-forbidden writer (this caricatured image—with the opposite evaluative sign, served its purposes).

As for authors who were socialist but far from Bolshevik, they treated the writer's work with indifference and coolness. For example, N.K. Mikhailovsky called him a "psychiatric talent," reproaching him for his fascination with "eccentric ideas and pathological phenomena."[1] P.A. Kropotkin's position was similar: "In Dostoevsky, pages of high realism are intertwined with the most fantastic episodes or pages of the most artificial theoretical disputes and conversations, in which the author set out his own doubts," he wrote, and his heroes "suffer from some kind of mental illness or are victims of moral perversion."[2]

---

* Philosopher and historian Petr Ryabov completed his PhD in Philosophy at Moscow State Pedagogical University

This level of understanding of Dostoevsky's philosophy is characteristic of many anarchist authors of the early 20th century.

Against this backdrop, growing interest in Dostoevsky's thought on the part of Alexei Alekseevich Borovoy (1875–1935), arguably the most significant anarchist philosopher in Russia in the first third of the 20th century, stands out.[3] Having opposed Soviet Communist stereotypes about the writer and the underestimation of his philosophy in socialist and anarchist-inclined circles, Borovoy integrated Dostoevsky's perspective (along with the ideas of A. Bergson, M.A. Bakunin, M. Stirner, F. Nietzsche) into an ideological synthesis imbuing anarchism with a full-fledged modern worldview, particularly during the last 15 years of his life. Borovoy wrote a book-length manuscript, simply titled "Dostoevsky", which is preserved in the Borovoy fund at the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art.[4]

How did the anarchist Borovoy become interested in the writer Dostoevsky? In his youth, Alexei did not immediately understand or accept his books. As he admits in his memoirs (also unpublished to this day):

> "Dostoevsky. In my gymnasium years, I hardly knew him… Everything seemed - complex, confusing, heavy. But as a student, I read S. Andreevsky's popular little book, then Volyn's famous work. And for the first time I clung to 'The Karamazovs' and 'The Demons.' Since then, I have never left Dostoevsky. I would be hard pressed to say how many times I have read 'The Karamazovs', 'The Idiot', 'The Demons', 'Notes from Underground', 'Winter Notes.' […] 'The Karamazovs', I probably read from beginning to end at least twenty times. And Dostoevsky, invisibly, imperceptibly to myself, played an exceptional role in the formation of my worldview. Much, of course, in my student years remained incomprehensible to me. Much was beyond my capacity. I was repelled by much due to my political consciousness. But I could not help but be agitated, feeling everywhere in Dostoevsky the

> overflowing element of rebellion. Logic, which did not retreat before any decision; a heart that was not afraid of any ends; everything cyclopean, irresistible, like life, overwhelmed me with its grandeur, its tragedy. Well, what could I, a young man, oppose: 'The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor' 'the nightmares of Ivan Karamazov', the mockery of the gentleman from 'Notes from Underground', the god-fighting of Kirillov… In my inexperienced soul, they bred a great and wonderful chaos. All the voices of the symphony of life in turn gave rise to a response in me. I recall that Rozanov's book and Bulgakov's wonderful articles, especially concerning the interpretation of the devil, clarified much for me and set me on a more conscious path of socio-psychological excavation into Dostoevsky."[5]

Describing his evolution while living in France in 1911–1913, Borovoy again mentions Dostoevsky: "My Nietzschean past, the ripening anarchist feeling, the passionate passion for Dostoevsky, Scriabinism, Bergsonism, the passion for the theory and practice of revolutionary syndicalism, in the inseparable and indistinguishable symbiosis of their influences, decomposed my uncritical optimism and formed new perspectives in me—a tragic worldview."[6] Links to Dostoevsky are frequent in the memoirs of A.A. Borovoy[7], which are dedicated to "Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Bakunin, Scriabin." He writes, "what was expressed or done by these thinkers, for me, is the most original and complete expression of 'humanity'. They all have a strong 'delight in life, faith in the boundless power of human creativity… Such is my worldview as well.'"[8]

The memoirist concisely summed up his thoughts about Dostoevsky's significance, referencing his book-length study of the author, thusly:

> "Dostoevsky is the deepest thinker in the history of thought… His frenzies, spitting, curses—were laid out in confession, labeled, slobbered over with clichés… But it's too early to petrify him. The world has not yet passed beyond Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky's problems cry

> out and will continue to cry out in even more perfect forms of historical existence… No one has presented a stronger affirmation of man, his right to life, his right to rebel against suffering, death, moral accounting… Dostoevsky should be interpreted—not via the husk of individual pronouncements, but via the inextinguishable rebelliousness, the rapture before the power of the human heart, the affirmation of popular truth, world brotherhood, the new man, free from philistinism and violence… Dostoevsky was undoubtedly a prophet – of revolution… I have dedicated an entire study to Dostoevsky, which has not yet seen the light of day."[9]

Borovoy often wrote about Dostoevsky in his diary, but noted that the "underground" motives of the writer's work and the "tears" of his heroes (derisibly associated with "Dostoevshchina" by Communist critics) were alien to him. "Decadence" was not his element at all. In internal exile in Vyatka (a city—renamed Kirov in the mid-1930s—in a western oblast of Siberia where opponents of the Soviet regime were often banished) on December 16, 1930, he wrote: "The Baudelairean flowers of evil, the underground and the abysses of Dostoevsky—only historically resonate with me… Of course, 'I' is an unbridled love of life, anxiety, passion, ecstasy, tireless 'I am.' And truly, my Dostoevsky is not the Dostoevsky of the underground, but the D[ostoevsky] of Mitya Karamazov, the D[ostoevsky] of unrestrained emotions, no matter how much they are trimmed from the outside by culture and early loss of naivety."[10] Again, on February 10, 1931 he writes: "To the setting sun and the oblique worlds of Dostoevsky. This is not my Sun… It tormented, killed me. My Sun is open, joyful, blinding. It drives away darkness, unclear, indefinite, [it] calls to life, cheerfulness, games, activity."[11]

Summarizing his 'love affair' with Dostoevsky in his Vyatka-era diary, Borovoy chooses the literary form of a nocturnal dialogue between himself and his devil.[12] This "devil" (the interlocutor of Ivan Karamazov) stands in for the sober and ruthless part of Borovoy's soul and is clearly borrowed from Dostoevsky. The anarchist identifies "himself" with feeling, and the "devil" in himself with rationality and logic. Bor-

ovoy turned to the image of the devil in "The Brothers Karamazov" more than once, interpreting it as the embodiment of vulgarity and paralyzing skepticism.[13]

Here is one example of how Dostoevsky's psychologically-infused imagery becomes an organic part of Borovoy's worldview. Reflecting on Dostoevsky, the philosopher compared him to Gorky by way of harshly critiquing the exemplary "Socialist Realist" writer of the USSR. Borovoy boldly reproached Gorky for his "well-meaning castration" of Dostoevsky and for an "unfortunate fascination with doctrinaire labels."[14] In *Conversations about the Living and the Dead*, Borovoy observes:

> "Where is there more a genuine revolution: a revolution that raises the 'I' from top to bottom, demanding from it complete moral freedom, sweeping everything off the path of its creative awareness. [Do we find it] in D[ostoevsky] with his never-reconciled Faust[ian] problems, with the search for a living real God, the demand of everyone and everyone to answer for all evil in the world, with his almost convulsive love for the 'people'? Or in G[orky] with his party dogmatism, which gives the philistine a 'conscience' to bend over his shoulder to the extent of 'unhealthy nerves', [Gorky] with his fear that the sleeping conscience of the Russian philistine will rest on demons. Oh, Smerdyakovshchina! [referencing the fourth brother in *The Brothers Karamazov* who denies his own humanity and is 'anti-life'] To discover nothing in [Dostoevsky's] 'The Demons' except a lampoon on the 'left'. To see in Dostoevsky a 'lullaby' of the philistine conscience. Is this not philistinism - in its most striking expression… Dostoevsky's problems are the most difficult *responsible* problems that a person has to deal with from the first days of one's historical existence… The prophet and the petty devil: one has Golgotha, the crucifixion of oneself and others, walking on breakdowns and abysses in the name of the highest truth,

> and, on the other hand - blissful appeasement in the name of the truncated 'truth' and flat affirmation of social hygiene."[15]

In Borovoy's *Conversations about the Living and the Dead* there are many references to Dostoevsky.[16] This work, which was never completed, was written in parallel with the larger "Dostoevsky" manuscript (1913–1930s), becoming partly a source of materials for Borovoy's last book. In addition to mention of Dostoevsky in memoirs, diaries, and articles, Alexei Alekseevich Borovoy dedicated a number of publications and talks to the writer. In 1920–1921, he delivered public lectures on "Anarchistic Elements in Dostoevsky's Worldview": "From public speeches before a wide audience at that time, I remember three and consider them the most successful of my entire oratorical life: 'Dostoevsky' (at the Polytechnic Museum), 'Bakunin,' and participation in the anniversary evening of the maximalists dedicated to P.L. Lavrov."[17] In April 1923, he participated in a heated debate about whether Bakunin was the prototype for Dostoevsky's character Stavrogin in "Demons," presenting a report in which he insisted on the "polarity of types" between Bakunin and Stavrogin. His main opponents—literary scholar Leonid Grossman and historian Vyacheslav Polonsky (whose position Borovoy was close to)—offered to publish his report in a book bringing together the debate presentations[18], but for some reason, this did not happen. On February 24, 1931, Borovoy, after reading an excerpt from Grossman's novel *Dostoevsky* in the *Literary Gazette*, sharply criticized the novel and its author in his diary.[19] On February 5, 1932, he wrote concerning V. Polonsky: "His polemic with Grossman (Bakunin – Stavrogin) was very interesting because two seasoned literary hustlers clashed in it. Grossman, however, was even more frivolous and loud. It was not difficult for Polonsky to debunk his cheap sensationalism. My performance against Grossman at the House of Printing was strong. Vera Figner was very pleased. Initially, Polonsky offered me the chance to participate in a joint book with him and Grossman… Later, Polonsky skillfully maneuvered, and the book appeared without me."[20] In 1925, Borovoy and his comrade Otverzhenny (N.G. Bulychev) published a joint book, *The Myth of Bakunin,* in the anarcho-syndicalist publishing house "Voice of Labor," to counter presentations of Bakunin as the prototype for Stav-

rogin. Borovoy's essay from this collection "Bakunin in 'Demons'" was later included in his final study, "Dostoevsky."[21] The same publishing house would shortly thereafter publish Otverzhenny's *Stirner and Dostoevsky*, with a preface by Borovoy.[22] At the time Borovoy was already working on "Dostoevsky" and recounted how this process was unfolding in his preface.[23] This is the last time he would reference the larger project in a related publication.

The first reference to a projected large-scale study appears in April 1922. The book about Dostoevsky was an outgrowth of public lectures which preserve traces of its origin but cannot in anyway substitute for the study itself. The initial manuscript had been sent to Leningrad's "Voice of Labor" publishing house on the 23rd,[24] but on the way it was stolen and unfortunately there was no draft manuscript. Borovoy would then attempt to restore the manuscript from memory. In 1931 he would relate the difficulties he encountered with seeing it to a publication:

> 'Then there were difficulties with censorship. I was classified as a mystic, although everyone who has an idea of my scientific and social activities knows that such a title is least suitable for my characterization. In particular, I have always been sharply negative towards the 'mystical anarchism' of the 1906 – 1907 period and its epigones. In 1928–1929, I fought against the 'mystics'—renegades of anarchism, not only in Moscow, but also on the pages of the Western anarchist press.[25]
>
> "Years the book lay dormant. I returned to it almost a decade later in 1930. During this time, a new literature about Dostoevsky has grown. I had to re-examine and reconstruct entire sections of my book.
>
> "And yet… This book does not fully and imperfectly convey what I wanted and could say about Dostoevsky. I did not have time or was unable to give it sharpness, alive in my heart and I have no hope of returning someday to the opportunity to speak about him again.

"If every critical book is inevitably a book about oneself, it is especially necessary to say about a book that deals with Dostoevsky. The gigantic scope of his thought, the exciting passion, the inexhaustible love of truth, the readiness to fight to the end - exclude the possibility of an 'objective' attitude towards his creation. Whoever speaks of Dostoevsky speaks importantly about himself.

"But how could it happen that I—a revolutionary, an anarchist—turned to Dostoevsky? How and why is he so close to me that saying 'my own' about him became a burning dream for me?

"As if nothing in the system of his philosophical and socio-political views is 'mine.' Neither—'Christ', nor 'Russian Socialism,' nor 'People,' nor, moreover, views on power, statehood and court, free from fetishism.

"But… Dostoevsky's creation, as a whole, Dostoevsky himself - remain for me a living, convincing unity. The very antinomies of Dostoevsky's thought and deed testify to their deep vitality.

"In them I found my own: dialectical thinking, the element of 'rebellion,' the primacy of 'life' over 'reason,' the affirmation of personality, the striving for universal unity.

"More than once I was stopped by doubts. If Dostoevsky's great creation did not save him from the heavy and shameful accusations of 'reactionism' and 'obscurantism' on the part of those with whom I was connected from a young age by the common nature of revolutionary views, what can my modest, albeit enthusiastic, of course, apologetic book do?

"And yet the desire to achieve justice was stronger. It seemed to me that my book could be an impetus to reconsider 'Dostoevsky', to 'rehabilitate' his creation.

> Dostoevsky's delusions, in accordance with the scale of his genius, may be enormous, but the purity of his intentions cannot be disputed, and the power of the moral 'rebellion' cannot be surpassed…
>
> "*Alexey Borovoy*. Vyatka. October 1931"[26]

So, in the autumn of 1931, Borovy completed (as he believed) work on what was, in effect, the third version of the book (365 pages of typed text). However, this version also remained fundamentally unfinished (like life, like freedom, like personality) while Borovy continued his distant dialogue with Dostoevsky, refining his statements. During his exile in Vyatka, and later in the city of Vladimir, where he lived from 1932 until his death in 1935, he continuously revised his work. This is evident from his numerous handwritten corrections and inserted sheets, which make up a third of the entire text. Many sheets of "Dostoevsky" are on the reverse sides of Vladimir City Municipal Trust forms (his memoirs were also often written on the reverse sides of forms) and he references various books and articles published between 1931 and 1935.

Judging by the diaries of the anarchist, during his years of internal exile (1928–1935), he read several hundred books on 19th-century Russian history and culture, many of which were used in "Dostoevsky." More often than not, Borovy does not explain his motive consulting these books. Rather, he limits himself to analyzing them in his diary, where he very rarely mentions his work on "Dostoevsky." An exception is the entry from September 14, 1929: "For Dostoevsky—I reviewed, and in places reread the 'History of the Russian Intelligentsia' by Ovsyanikov-Kulikovsky."[27]

In its third iteration, the book was being written without hope of publication and, hence, without much regard for censorship. In "Dostoevsky," as in his memoirs, the one tactic in relation to potential censors is to *not say everything he thinks* (he limits himself to hints and omissions) and never to say what he does not think. Sometimes he ritually calls Dostoevsky's views "petty-bourgeois" and "objectively reactionary" (openly mocking well-meaning potential readers), but

more often he quotes statements by Dostoyevsky that directly strike at the realities of Bolshevik society without commenting on them in any way: thus he invites the reader to assess the implied message for themselves.

Borovoy's "Dostoevsky" was created over 15 years and a journey from a general philosophy of life to pointedly existential-oriented thinking:[28] along with his memoirs, it encompasses the most mature period of his creativity. During the pinnacle of his activity as an orator and writer (1906–1907 and 1917–1920) Borovoy, due to haste, published books in the "raw," without finishing them. Conversely, in exile and on the threshold of eternity, he had time to summarize and address future generations of readers. Nonetheless, old habits persist. On May 15, 1932, he wrote in his diary: "Finished Dostoevsky. I am moderately satisfied with it. This is more me than him."[29] On November 13, 1932, he remarks: "What has my 'idleness' done to me? What did I accomplish in Vyatka? I brought my 'Dostoevsky' into order, generally satisfying me—no more."[30] And on December 14, 1934, in Vladimir, Borovoy read the introduction to his memoirs to someone named T., who commented, "Dostoevsky stands out compared to the rest." "I believe, and there are reasons for this," acknowledged Alexei Alexeevich.[31]

The obvious goal of the book was to defend Dostoevsky's philosophy from false attacks while summarizing Borovoy's philosophical quests. Sometimes direct references to the present day burst into the text. Having remarked that "in people at a critical moment, animal nature began to speak so strongly that the high spirit fell, and the miserable body was ready to buy itself salvation at the price of humiliation, renunciation of heroism, even betrayal of ideas and ideological brothers," the author continued in a footnote: "Illustrations could be found in abundance, at least in the political processes of our time."[32] Given the persecutory campaign against "Dostoevshchina" then underway in the USSR and the anarchists' traditional indifference to the writer's legacy,[33] a projected book titled "Dostoevsky" was an act of resistance and intellectual courage.

While the book is a solid study, drawing on a boundless ocean of literature studied by the author (including Dostoevsky's books, his drafts, letters, articles, diaries, as well as memoirs, correspondence of his contemporaries and hundreds of studies by Rozanov, Solovyov, Shestov, Berdyaev, Lunacharsky, Volotsky, Grossman, Bakhtin and many others)—it is not so much an academic product as a pamphlet, a lyrical poem and, above all, an independent philosophical statement inspired by Dostoevsky. Borovoy not only seeks to penetrate the writer's world but, adopting a 'free essay' style, develops, clarifies, and actualizes "his own" presence within his study while carefully distancing himself from "someone else's." Borovoy's work is dedicated to Dostoevsky in the true, deep sense: he tries to reveal the author's inner life, the pain and problems that tormented Fyodor Mikhailovich, and he does so tactfully, subtly and respectfully. A vivid example of Borovoy's polemic is his defense of Dostoevsky from slander: citing the criticisms of N. Brodsky, Borovoy sarcastically exclaims:

> "What nonsense and what slanderous nonsense! A greater distortion of Dostoevsky's image cannot be imagined. Let him be a hater of Chernyshevsky, let him be an enemy of socialism, but… a reactionary, but… a liar, but… a coward! 'Veiled'—in Dostoevsky!—struggle, because it is simply—an unwise, ignorant outburst, dictated not by the pathos of struggle, but by fanaticism—dull, not distinguishing anything, not wanting to understand anything… But Dostoevsky did not live, could not live by the prescriptions of the brave and truthful Brodsky, because they were repelled by his moral consciousness."[34]

Borovoy demonstrates not only the originality of his thought, but also virtuoso hermeneutics. He is continuously moving in a circle from Dostoevsky's era to his own personality, and from Dostoevsky's creations to the figure of the creator and back, charged by empathy. For him, his hero is not a litany of dead and frozen "isms" detached from humanity's being, but a musical fecundity of "leitmotifs" and "aspiration"—something elusive, becoming, not reducible to anything and not divisible.

The philosopher's originality lies in the fact that he does not limit himself to fixing and evaluating the writer's "position" or collecting his statements: he goes deeper—from the "Letter" to the "Spirit," from empiricism to metaphysics and psychology, from the expressible (in "answers") to the implicit and hidden (addressing internalized questions and motives). Thus, reflecting on whether Dostoevsky was a "revolutionary" or a "reactionary", Borovoy queries what constitutes a "reaction" or a "revolution"? "Dostoevsky was deep and complex" he observes; thus, "it is impossible to measure him by the usual yardstick." The writer's dialectical approach, "which subjected both the violent quietism of reaction and the violent dynamism of revolution to equal fire, was essentially not accepted by either side" during his lifetime. Furthermore, in his novels, "Dostoevsky encroached on power, the church, the landowner, the official, as well as on the canons of revolution" in such a way that "his 'consciousness' was always 'free.'"[35] He does not designate people 'heroes' from a superficial perspective, he seeks to understand them internally. And if he judges a figure, he does not do so according to ideological societal rules, but according to his own unique perspective. This fruitful approach allows one to "deconstruct" (to speak in contemporary terms) stereotypes about Dostoyevsky. Borovoy never tires of ridiculing clichéd views of the author: on the one hand, that he is a "servant of Tsarism", and, on the other hand, a "defender of the downtrodden and insulted." He also finds it amusing "tear apart" the author's supposed betrayal of his own principles: "Dostoevsky's contradiction is a substantial contradiction, and not a defect of logic or a betrayal of convictions. In the essence of his aspirations, Dostoevsky remained true to himself throughout his life… He is always 'in search of' and 'becoming.'"[36] Borovoy rightly observes that to be "true to oneself" means to be true to one's questions and one's unique path, to self-define as an exercise in self-originating. He argues, "Can one look for simplicity, wholeness, faithfulness to oneself from him [Dostoevsky]? To oneself - to which oneself?—When the 'I' is agitated, moves, grows, it cannot - does not want to—remain itself or only itself. Normative ethics was not for him."[37] This is the approach of a romantic who comprehends the secret "soul of the soul," the "music of music," the Heraclitus' "fire" in objectified objects and texts.

Responding to all those who criticized the writer for his "unhealthy interest in psycho-pathologies," Boroviy countered: "But to solve the question of man in all his fullness, of all his destinies—present and future, to speak about how man is possible and to dismiss in this solution—that unhealthy thing that is customary to shove into kennels, into silent psychiatric hospitals, but it is customary to remove from public squares, for fear of infecting a decent public, would mean turning off the straight… road of Dostoevsky and again entering the path of bastardism, the path of saccharifying man, the path of bourgeois literature and bourgeois publicity. Dostoevsky has no prohibitions on everything that is man."[38] Therefore Dostoevsky's "cruelty is not an accident, not a whim, not a spicy anecdote. It is an answer to the ontological contradictions of the human being, which cannot be eliminated either by the benevolence of preachers of divine harmony, or by the stubbornness of social reformism. Only man is real. But in man, everywhere and always, elemental forces speak and act. And the formal primary source of Dostoevsky's cruelty is his unbearable sharpness of vision for others."[39]

Defending Dostoevsky's (and everyone's) right to non-partisanship,[40] the anarchist underlines that "there is a real, unique and indisputable Dostoevsky, unlike the lifeless casts of his overly subjective interpreters."[41] The author does not succumb to ideological clichés. His novels reflect "the power and sincerity of genius able to go transcend its class limitations, addressing 'man', 'humanity', future centuries—[it] triumphs over time."[42] Thus, according to Borovoy, Dostoyevsky ranks with Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Byron, and Pushkin.[43] Borovoy was always sensitive to historical processes and factors. History for him is one of the synonyms of "Life", and rationalism is anti-historical, because it rejects spontaneity and diversity. But by the 1930s he comes to emphasize the "non-historical" in man (eternal and personal) in reaction to the totalizing historicism and class-reductionist approach being imposed in the USSR. His summary apologia for Dostoevsky praises the novelist as "an enemy of the political and ethical philosophy of philistinism, the greatest denier of bourgeois culture, a passionate preacher of brotherhood and universal unity - Dostoevsky, of course, cannot be called a 'reactionary' thinker."[44]

Borovoy had favorite images of Dostoevsky, which became part of his own artistic and philosophical world. First of all, there is Ivan Karamazov[45] and the "gentleman with a mocking physiognomy" from *Notes from Underground*—an image of the eternal irrational arbitrariness of man. Borovoy refers to this image of the "gentleman" many times.[46] Often Borovoy calls the "gentleman" an "anarchist" and a "Stirnerian" [embodying the anarchist egoist philosophy of Max Stirner], who, however, can encapsulate the spirit of a group of rebels or even a rebellious mass. For Borovoy (as for French existentialist Albert Camus), personalism does not mean loneliness and it does not exclude solidarity. In his memoirs, he wrote about the emergence of a tragic feeling in himself: "The "gentleman" with a "mocking", "ungentlemanly" physiognomy woke up, and I was powerless against his questions."[47]

Borovoy "introduces" Dostoyevsky to his favorite thinkers: the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, the rebellious Alexander Herzen, Stirner, Friedrick Nietzsche, and French metaphysician Henri Bergson. These connections allow him to better understand their thoughts and express his own. The tragedy of Herzen, his attack on the "theory of progress" and bourgeois values, Bakunin's rebelliousness, Bergson's intuitionism and vitalism, Nietzsche's thoughts on "love for the distant," personalism, and Stirner's critique of "fetishisms" find clear resonances in Dostoevsky's philosophy. In addition to those mentioned, Borovoy's study contains numerous episodic comparisons of Dostoevsky's personality and thought with those of Pushkin, Shakespeare, Byron, Kant, Blok, Schopenhauer, and others. Thus, in Dostoevsky's laughter, Borovoy finds both "the ontological depth of Plato," "the tenderness and reconciliation of Cervantes," "the witty sharpness of Shakespeare," "the misanthropic scourge of Swift," "the agonizing irony of Leopardi," "the burning flame of Nietzsche," and "the aesthetic nihilism of Wilde."[48]

Borovoy, a lawyer by education, brings together all the pros and cons in a face-to-face meeting: "Let's listen to witnesses and accusers from different social formations and political camps as an example," "now let's turn to testimonial characteristics."[49] The structure of his book is as follows. The preface is followed by a "lyrical introduction" (on

the problems of personality and life in Dostoevsky), a chapter about him as a political thinker, chapters about his attitude to the "religious problem", nationalism, autocracy, populism, anti-Semitism, violence, anarchism, a chapter focusing on his style, and then a series of excursions: "Stavrogin and Bakunin", "Strakhov and Dostoevsky", "Dostoevsky, Belinsky and Turgenev."

Borovoy possessed an amazing and rare gift—the ability to think holistically and figuratively, linking any issue under discussion with all the others in their organic unity. If, according to Novalis, thought is a "cool" feeling, then Borovoy felt a feeling behind every thought, "warming" and nourishing it. He is "objective" as a scientist, if objectivity is understood as honesty, subtlety, adherence to facts, and completeness when analyzing issues. But he is not at all "objective" if objectivity is understood as a stance of indifference and non-judgment. Alexei Alekseevich cares about Fyodor Mikhailovich's questions, although he does not always care about his answers. He is close to the writer's religious pathos: "Dostoevsky's worldview and worldview are religious", but "Dostoevsky's religious system is outside the official church", because it denies all authorities except Christ. For the writer, Borovoy believed, the Church "grows into a universal federation of brotherhoods, a federation that knows neither racial nor territorial divisions, nor coercive institutions of bourgeois statehood."[50] For him, "socialism", "liberalism", "anarchism" are not just programs, they are configurations of wholistic human types, systems of values and feelings. Borovy creatively developed the criticism of philistinism and liberalism (as its political projection) by Herzen and Dostoevsky, associating it with contemporary "Soviet" philistinism. In "Dostoevsky" he settled accounts with authoritarian socialism and poured out his hatred and contempt for liberal "people of the golden mean."[51]

The theme that runs through the entire book is the theme of Life. Indeed, it recurs through all of Borovoy's work. He was greatly influenced by the ideas of Nietzsche and Bergson and treated the concepts of "living and dead" as central categories in his philosophy, as encapsulated in a significant treatise, *Conversations about the Living and the Dead*. According to Alexei Alekseevich, Dostoevsky is a great philosopher of Life, and one cannot help but agree. Life in the work of the

novelist is revealed in all its dynamism, spontaneity, fullness, tragedy, contradiction and grandeur. It denies the pitiful schemes of reason imposed upon it:

> "Immense, completely contradictory, having traversed alien paths to the end and not finding ends to his [Dostoevsky's] own, knowing everything, having experienced an unprecedented scope of passions, he has encompassed within himself - the ultimate liberation and all stages of achievement: temple and marketplace, the ideal of the Madonna and the ideal of Sodom, the thirst for respectability and the thirst for all humanity and the underground, brotherhood and the sharpness of the cry of exclusivity."[52]

Dostoevsky, according to the anarchist, is simultaneously an individualist and a preacher of brotherhood; a denouncer of "individualism" and a soil-bound patriot; a herald of "Russian socialism" and a cosmopolitan universalist, a singer of "all humanity." He preaches the acceptance of Life with all its suffering and torment, denying any hope of "heaven on earth." The people, in the pre-rational immediacy of their existence, are the expression of life energy, life organicism, life truth and, in essence, one of the "pseudonyms" of Life, opposing the rationalistic schemes of intellectuals: this is the central thesis of Dostoevsky, as it is for Borovoy. "The life system", he writes, "cannot but be 'illogical', in the formal, scholastic sense, [it] cannot but include contradictions. […] Abstract, not concrete, not dialectical 'logism' - outside the reality surrounding us. It is an invention, a practical invention. It is an attempt, by violence against reality and dynamism, to adapt to chaos, contradictions, i.e. life. In contradictions—freedom and creativity, in logism—slavery and death."[53] Thus, following Bakunin, Bergson, French political theorist Georg Sorel and Dostoevsky—long before T. Adorno, M. Horkheimer and M. Foucault—A.A. Borovoy persistently points to the danger of the expansion of "repressive rationality," which kills everything living with its logically impeccable ideological dogmas, which "disenchants" reality. For example, concerning rationalists and their claims to reason: "this greatest, according to the rationalists - revolutionary, exploding

traditions, dogmas, authorities, ends up opening the way [new—crossed out] himself—to authorities, theories and formulas, this time, supposedly, irrefutable. In place of the old [torn out—crossed out] dogmas, new ones grow, [already—crossed out] from the moment of birth, stiffening, dogmas that restrict freedom and action. And since the system of scientific truths is, first of all, a system of closed, deterministic series - this is where its deeply conservative, reactionary character lies, its peculiar moral fatalism."[54]

Borovoy defends the idea of the organic nature of contradictions in Dostoevsky's world (since Life itself is contradictory, contrary to reason) and dialogism.[55] Borovoy wrote extensively and vividly about the polyphony and multivocality of Dostoevsky's universe at the same time as Mikhail Bakhtin, who made this idea central to his interpretation of Dostoevsky's poetics (sometimes Borovoy directly references Bakhtin's book).[56] He writes: "From the diverse formulas of acceptance of life, Dostoevsky, with his inherent pluralism of thought, which has nothing in common [of course—crossed out] with superficial and mechanical eclecticism, does not affirm any one as all-encompassing, as capable of claiming monopoly significance in the sense that interests us." Such polyphony raises a number of questions for Alexei Alexeyevich: "1). What does polyphony represent - the result of an extraordinary ability to abstract from one's own worldview, the result of the decomposition of a unified - contradictory and complex consciousness into a multitude of other consciousnesses that are discordant and not merged with each other? Or is it the result of an equally extraordinary ability to empathize with other consciousnesses, alien to the author's consciousness, not included in it? 2). How to know the true 'Self' of Dostoevsky? How to distinguish 'Self' from the polyphony of 'non-Self'?"[57] According to the author of "Dostoevsky," the answer to these questions is as follows: "And Dostoevsky's inhuman endurance managed to encompass the dialectic of life - all of it, entirely. […] Dostoevsky primarily has a superhuman range of thought; he is extraordinarily rich in thought. Within the narrow confines of life, he could not only exhaust himself but perhaps did not even manage to convey the main thing that was hidden within him."[58] Therefore, "Dostoevsky's world is a world of doubles. And this is not a world of illusions, but the most real reality." Accord-

ing to Borovoy, this is precisely why there are almost no "completely bad" or "completely good" characters in Dostoevsky's novels, and his own position is more clearly articulated in his journalistic works. Reflecting on polyphony in Dostoevsky's work, Borovoy (who was a gifted musician and perceived the world musically) resorts to an analogy close to him: "His symphony of life reflected the fullness and complexity of the consciousness contemporary to him. The timbres contrasted with each other, and Dostoevsky wanted to achieve maximum sound from each. But Dostoevsky's sensitivity and passion, which gave each theme, each part an extremely convex character, created the illusion that it was this or that voice that was the author's true or favorite voice."[59]

Life for Dostoevsky, the researcher notes, is an organic bottomless totality, contradiction, dialogue, irrational flow, movement, creation destroying, the knowledge of meaning and the growth of man through suffering and pain. "His unparalleled dynamism merges the elements of destruction and creation into one liberating synthesis. Denying, he loves, destroying, he builds."[60] Borovoy brings together his favorite thinkers: Dostoevsky and Bergson, noting the absolute acceptance of life inherent in both, the call to "love life more than its meaning": "Life is irrational. Logic replaces reality with a concept."[61] And therefore:

> "Science has a limited auxiliary role. It is only one of the particular forms of man's relationship to reality. Its knowledge is incomplete and unreliable. By its methodological nature, it should not claim to be a comprehensive and complete understanding of life, for it often stops where the most inviolable, the most exciting questions for man begin, regardless of their origin. Science mechanizes and must mechanize—this is the essence of scientific knowledge—the living world. And it would be in vain to consider this peculiar simplification of real reality with the right to boundless and infallible predictions—to consider it life itself. Dostoevsky might agree with modern anti-intellectualism [that is, with Bergson's philosophy–P.R.] that the

> nature of reason is characterized by a "lack of understanding" of life. […] Reason itself, its experience, its system reveal and confirm its own inadequacy," since reason and science are fundamentally limited and antinomic."[62]
>
> "But if reason is powerless against the primordiality of world evil, then life itself, with its eternal beating, rebirth, its new shoots, justifies evil and death. And life and death are equally necessary, equally beautiful. […] Life is justified in the direct feeling for it, in the thirst, the ability, the skill to penetrate all the pores of the universe and dissolve it in itself. Then we feel life as a free stream of the universal run, in which there are no gaps, contradictions, evil, suffering. […] Life is continuous dynamism, activism, creativity. To renounce it is to make a decision of vulgarity, just as slavishly submitting to the past as it is criminally indifferent to the future."[63]

About dialectics and Dostoevsky's creative laboratory, Borovoy wrote enthusiastically: "This is an example of direct knowledge that does not break away from life. This is the observation and thinking of a realist. Death to formulas and schemes, no matter how perfect their logical and moral sources, and long live life! From negations grow affirmations, already containing within themselves, like everything from life, the germs of future death. Life ends in death, death leads to life."[64] The most vivid and complete expression in Dostoevsky's work of Life's protest against the oppression of dogmas and schemes, against calculating utilitarianism, deadening rationalism, attempts to dissolve the living and personal into the anonymous and general, as I have already noted, was for Borovoy the image of the "gentleman with a mocking face": "And in Dostoevsky's spiritual legacy, the mocking gentleman is his greatest psychological and truly "anarchic" invention, and his reasoning that "twice two is four" is no longer life, but the beginning of death, and that "twice two is five is sometimes a very nice thing" - is the most significant of all his philosophical "gnoseological" statements."[65] In the midst of working on "Dostoevsky" on

January 16, 1931, Borovy in one of his letters from Vyatka formulated his existential tragic worldview so clearly:

> "Only with the arrangement of the kitchen will there be a demand for a person, a universal person, living with the fullness of his 'Self.' […] Professionalism in general will not be needed. […] For man in the fullness of his being is the only undeniable reality of all conceivable and possible human historical processes. […] And why—individualism, affirming the freedom of my expression, not in particulars, but as a whole, considering every deed as part of the general creative act of life, in which individual aspects are indistinguishable, for it is in their totality that there is the joyful meaning of 'my' being (now I do not feel it, as a separate screw, a separate gear does not understand the work of the whole mechanism)—is not philosophy, not metaphysics, but a worldview, practice, direct experience of life."

The tragic duality of man lies in the thirst for life and the inevitability of death:

> "1. His eternal (within the human) incompleteness, the absence of reconciling formulas, the struggle with living antinomies, taking place against the background of our biological givenness, the inevitability of the tragic duality of our nature: the unlimitedness of the intellectual-volitional charge and the fundamental limitation of human existence —death. […] The human does not know peace, harmony, stopping. 2. The non-elimination (within the same framework) of the fundamental antagonisms of the personal with the social. One in the other is not completely soluble."[66]

"Thus, the philosophy of life, the art of life, is the doctrine of the torment of endless quests."[67] As there is without doubt there is no faith, so for Dostoevsky, according to Borovoy, there is no self-consciousness, morality, life, personality without suffering[68]: "Suffering

for Dostoevsky—completely in the spirit of Schopenhauer's pessimism - is the substantial sign of life. It is necessary, inseparable from life. […] Suffering is the only source of moral awakening."[69] The goal of man, according to Dostoevsky (and Borovoy shares this belief) is not at all "in happiness, but in its achievement", not in the frozen and dead, but in the living and creative negating and rebellious creation, in the awareness of the tragedy of being and, in a Pushkin-wise way, its acceptance as a gift and absolute reality. "Dostoevsky, taking Pushkin's path as the path of truth, as the only path out of the dead ends of despair, found his quenching formula—in accepting life, affirming personality, bringing it closer to the truth of the people. Let there be suffering, let there be sorrow! But still, still above all suffering and sorrow—the call of invincible life triumphs."[70] From the standpoint of Reason, the world has no justification, but for Borovoy and Dostoevsky, it is not Reason, but Life that is the ultimate authority in this dispute.

For the anthropocentrist and romantic Borovoy, Life and Man are closely connected, almost identical to each other. And for him, Dostoevsky acts simultaneously as a philosopher of Life and as the greatest, exceptional researcher of Man[71]: "No one has penetrated man deeper and more fully than him. All the strings of the human soul rang in his work."[72] Moreover, man was understood by the great writer existentially-personally: as a unique being, irrationally-contradictory, willful, tragic in his striving for death and the ultimate questions of being, rebelling against the meaninglessness of the world, not reducible entirely to the historical and social, impenetrable to the end in his mental and spiritual underground, "a man of flesh and blood" (in the words of Unamuno):

> "No one, ever, not even Shakespeare himself, has stood up with such a terrible force—man. Not a product of a historical epoch, not a slave to the strongest circumstances, not a man of race, tribe, not a man of profession, but a man—in every immeasurable sense of the word. […] Man is a knot, who knows who tied it? By God, by life, by fate, by his own capricious stupid will, but - a knot of unraveled, unexplored

> feelings, elusive aspirations, a tangle of contradictions, open, alive, but oozing blood irresistibly charming and irresistibly vile, and on the whole, irresistibly terrible man."[73]

It was this approach to man that appealed to the personalist Borovoy. All of Dostoevsky's work, he emphasized, is a fiery apotheosis of personality, and moreover: "She is always the goal, never the means", a vivid proof of which, "on the contrary", the anarchist considered the collapse of the utopia of rationalism and "individualism" in the person of Raskolnikov.[74] Borovoy persistently emphasized the "moral maximalism", rebelliousness and personalism of Dostoevsky, who was for him, like Bakunin, a teacher of freedom and humanity: "Only personality, only man—for Dostoevsky [is—crossed out]—the true self-evident reality. Only she has an independent moral existence, not fully derived from the order of social relations. The meaning and value of a social union can be determined [only—crossed out] through the meaning and value of its members. And therefore, Dostoevsky categorically protests against the hypostatization of historical transient forms of the social process into independent entities."[75] "The ethical individualism and maximalism of Dostoevsky were irreconcilable with the historical conditioning and relativity of 'socialist' materialism, the relativism of class ideals."[76] From which it followed that Dostoevsky's rejection of "double bookkeeping" in politics and private life and his rejection of "state interest" as a justification for inhuman actions.

Speaking of Dostoevsky's polemic against 19th-century socialism, Borovoy (a convinced socialist!) had the courage to declare that in this dispute he was almost entirely on Dostoevsky's side, since: "for then-socialism and socialists" the worldview foundations were "the cult of 'reason' and materialistic philosophy, determinism and atheism, utilitarianism."[77] With the help of his great "ally"—Dostoevsky, Alexei Alekseevich (like Camus in "The Rebel" a quarter of a century later) carries out self-criticism of socialist thought and a revision of its worldview foundations in order to develop an anarchist worldview on an existentialist basis, breaking with the basic myths of the New Age and more consonant with the catastrophic spirit of the 20th

century, prophetically predicted by the writer. However, the author makes an important clarification: "The object of Dostoevsky's criticism was already a partially outdated 'nihilist' with a rationalistic philosophy of history and 'egoistic' morality. Petty-bourgeois revolutionaries, rebels of the 70s with their idealism, criticism of utilitarianism, moral maximalism, even 'religious' orientation—did not find in Dostoevsky's work a philosophical reflection of equal strength, like their historical predecessors."[78] Borovoy himself knew about the Narodnik revolutionaries not only from hundreds of books: he was personally acquainted with A.V. Golshtein and M.P. Sazhin (close associates of M.A. Bakunin), was friends with V.N. Figner, communicated with P.A. Kropotkin, and in exile in Vyatka (during the years of work on "Dostoevsky") he became friends with N.A. Charushin.

"The main vice of the socialist worldview is the penetrating rationalism"[79]—that is, the substitution of life with schemes, the violence of the masses over the individual, the scientistic artificiality and coercion. An anarchist philosopher summarizes the content of "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man": "So, 'reason' and 'science' are not enough to conquer life, truth, joy, not enough to erase evil, not enough to affirm good."[80] Borovoy wrote about Dostoevsky: "His idea of man, of individuality, was the antithesis of the 'natural' man of rationalism—a man of fiction, without flesh and blood, an average abstract man, devoid of any historical or national coverings. In a peculiar irreligious skeptical individualism, assimilated by rationalistic socialism, there was no room for a living, concrete, original personality."[81] In Marxism, such a fatalistic-deterministic view of man only intensified, allowing "to put socialism on its socialist accounts, a personality devoid of any 'species differences,' to recognize personality as a sociological 'nothing,' since it became impersonal. And as the socialist doctrine grew stronger, it became more and more imbued with bourgeois-rationalistic optimism, the belief in the triumphant march of man towards the highest final harmony by forces inherent in the very process of social development outside of direct personal teleological actualism."[82] And this led to "scientifically justified" complacency and passivity of the individual, relieving him of personal responsibility. But "Dostoevsky came to man as he is. […] There is no middle man with a middle mind and a middle will. Everything

is concrete, individual, dictated by 'blood.'" Therefore, if "scientific", deterministic socialism was alien to Dostoevsky, then utopian, personalistic, libertarian socialism, "based on the moral feeling of man, on the spiritual thirst of humanity, on its striving for perfection and purity, and not on ant-like necessity was quite acceptable to him", as it was to his anarchist admirer. Borovoy explained the reasons for Dostoevsky's rejection of materialism: "Determinism, mechanism—for Dostoevsky, they crossed out of human life—teleology, freedom, therefore, man himself. He—for whom the facts of his immediate consciousness so definitely, so imperatively spoke of immortality, of the existence of 'other worlds,' could not accept universal mechanical causality, could not accept the world-machine. […] Dostoevsky gave so much in his teachings to man, his 'right,' his 'willfulness,' that equating him with a silent cog in a machine could not be accepted by his moral consciousness."[83] If a person has his own dignity, freedom, then materialism, determinism, scientism are incompatible with his rebellious will and creativity.

Following the writer, Borovoy protested against the "religion of progress" which refused to see the living human being in an attempt to substitute and obscure the tragedy of individual existence with social reforms. There can be no end to humanity's search for truth, there can be no paradise on earth that smugly denies human suffering and sacrifices the present for the future:

> "What boundless naivety must it seem to us to expect that in some faraway kingdom, in some distant state, universal contentment will finally arrive: doubts will be resolved, enmity will be over, people will embrace each other and understand one another completely, and there will be no limits to joy. The tragic will be forever erased from life. […] Of course, the 'crystal palaces' and other proud acquisitions of civilization will bring considerable satisfaction to many, if not all, of humanity, huddled in stinking barracks, damp basements, half-destroyed shanties, dizzying attics, and so on and so forth—but can human 'affairs' be concluded with such satisfaction? Is the solution to

all human mysteries found in resolving economic and sanitary issues? Was Tolstoy not right in his sarcasm towards Mechnikov, who supposedly believed that curing all human ailments could be achieved by properly addressing the problem of latrines? And was his 'optimistic philosophy' not, therefore, the apotheosis of scientific bourgeoisie? […] If the restless spirit, its falls and rises, its creative self-liberation, is the true meaning of human existence, its justification, then 'optimistic philosophy' precisely encroaches upon this meaning, seeks to clip the wings of the creative spirit, to extract from human nature all that is questioning, all that is heroic, replacing them with impassive satiety according to the rules of 'cheerful science.' And such a philosophy *calls* itself 'optimistic'? Can one conceive, in essence, a more crude parody of optimism? To reduce the quest to the scientific arrangement of the kitchen? […] Never has any philosophy so boundlessly naively removed from philosophy—the philosopher himself, the human being. Never has the irony of science been so ruthlessly directed against itself.[84]

"And who, on the basis of what calculations, can say that 'one's own foolish will' will ever disappear, or will coincide completely, to the end, to full reconciliation, to complete harmony with another's 'foolish will'? No, 'one's own foolish will'—neither human consciousness nor human feeling will yield or reconcile with its demise. […] There are no values before which the creator would stand in powerless reverence. There is no perfection of institutions, even if erected according to all the rules of rationalist wisdom, that would not merely be a stage in the eternally rebellious element of the human spirit. There is no benefit, no such practical, mercantile, historical, earthly arrangement that could reconcile with itself forever, to the end, the fickle, greedy, uncalculating to the point of sanctity human being. […] And therefore, we must forever

> abandon the naive and seductive dream of building the Kingdom of God here on earth. It would be the death of the human being, as we know him, as we love him, whom we are zealous for in the future.[85]

Here is Borovoy's "Kierkegaardian" understanding of truth (personalistic, dynamic, based on imperatives of sincerity and self-expression - opposed to anonymous, universal, coercive, imposed objective truths), largely inspired by his study of Dostoevsky's work and his anarchism, which he viewed not as a finalist utopia, but as a personal worldview and direction of movement:

> "And never, in any timeframe, in our most distant generations, will we fully, completely obtain that synthetic truth, the striving for which, ultimately, conditions all our creative activity. Aspects of truth are personal, individual, born in moments of inner revelation, they cannot be enclosed in logically honed formulas. Let them be objectively, scientifically, lawfully, unprovable, subjectively—they are reliable. An open, universally binding 'truth'—dominates, regulates, limits the freedom of future generations, invites to a calm that Dostoevsky's nature least reconciles with."[86]

And also:

> "In creative terms, only the full disclosure of 'one's own' sensation of the world, 'one's own' subjective truth, has theoretical and practical meaning. To build houses of cards according to all the rules of formal logic, to strive, at all costs, to mold some universally binding 'objective truth' from subjective truths, means to compose an eclectic porridge, to accumulate scholastic rubbish. And any attempts to consider creative achievements not from the point of view of the concrete-actual, contained in them, but from the point of view of the contradictions admitted in them, are only evidence of the lack of originality, cowardice, at best, political talent on the part of the researcher or critic."[87]

Scoring off the omnipotence and dominance of the Soviet state's official newspaper *Pravda* (Russian for "truth" in quotation marks and with a capital letter), Borovoy had his own opinion on the subject: "First of all, all human truth, and therefore socio-political truth, is always in the process of development. Truth ceases to be such as soon as it becomes a 'relating idea', a common place, a constant, habitual companion of life. Against any crystallized, stopped truth, man immediately rebels. This rebellion can be both a daring in the name of further, higher truth, and an act of arbitrariness. But… when old truth dies, we seek new truth. This primordial, indestructible human need for rebellion—Dostoevsky brilliantly expressed in "The Gentleman.'"[88]

Alexey Alexeyevich comments on "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor":

> "And here is the deepest, most significant, and most convincing thing that has ever been said about the forms of social and political organization of humanity. Freedom, eternal yearning, creativity on one side. Slavery, pacification, mechanical following of someone else's directive on the other. And all who are given the ability to dream, to reflect on the fates of humanity, who are practically able to shape them, all come to this crossroads. The sword or peace? Power or powerlessness? The entire historical life of humanity is in this clash of elements, in this inexorable spiritual duel. Dostoevsky's solution is known: pain, unrest, the curse of civilization and the reasoning that tries to buy human freedom with abundance and crystal palaces. Deception cannot be the foundation of life; there is no authority that remains unshaken, no mystery that will not be torn away."[89]

In the era of building the "crystal palace" and the universal official jubilation about it, Alexei Borovoy defended the human right to suffer and rebelled against the illusions of the "end of history," even if it were a "happy ending."[90] In the age of triumph for party unambiguity,

black-and-white worldviews, and ideological dictation, Borovoy, in his book about Dostoevsky, advocated for the depth and complexity of the human experience, against any unequivocal labels and formulas. "Only the revolutionary epochs that break apart in a paroxysm of creativity throw out unnecessary reflexes of the time and concentrate attention and will on relatively elementary—psychologically speaking—destructive-constructive tasks. The hypnosis of such epochs eliminates individualistic 'psychologism' and frees a person from the heavy 'pessimistic' burden. *The drum drowns out contradictions* [italics for emphasis]. But […], having looked around in the newly conquered household, a person naturally returns to problems that sociology cannot resolve—birth, gender, death."[91] These thoughts of Borovoy remind one of Erich Fromm's reflections on the eternal existential antinomies of humanity. In the era of the triumph of "scientific" communism, Borovoy reminded us, following Dostoevsky, of the limits of science and reason and the impossibility for them to encompass and even more so define life. Dostoevsky and Herzen, the anarchist convincingly points out, underline: "Faith in the power of the all-arranging human 'reason,' in the healing power of the progress of knowledge, in the parallelism of the successes of reason and morality has been undermined. Strong objections were made against rationalist assertions of the unity and continuity of historical progress. […] Thus, stone by stone, a new understanding of the world was built, which was supposed to liberate the real, concrete person. […] Therefore—there are no altars worthy of human sacrifice, no idols capable of justifying such a sacrifice. […] The meaning of life is in life itself,"[92] and each individual and each era has independent and absolute significance. The basic mythologems of the Modern time were undermined, and in their place came "heroic pessimism" of an existential type.

The human quest is eternal. The individual is not reducible to a set of social roles and functions. The meaning of life is not reduced to the well-fed bodily pleasures of the philistine. In the era of state-sponsored "optimism," Borovoy, appealing to Dostoevsky, preached "heroic pessimism": "Man for the first time becomes a problem in society, having solved the technical details of his existence. With the cessation of the 'class war,' with particular relief, the biological nature

of man and psychophysical individuality come to the fore, man 'in himself' will become the central theme, because nothing will serve him as an obstacle. Now there is a man in quotation marks (definition only through the social), only then will the researcher face a man without quotation marks.'[93] And the 'human' in Dostoevsky, and with amendments to 'sociality,' will remain significant. In this sense, he can be compared only with Shakespeare. 'Man without quotation marks' is existence in its purest form. It is primary, irrational, free, spontaneous, indivisible and… mysterious. Where the human 'unit' was recognized as quantitatively insignificant and unworthy of attention in the face of infinite magnitudes, Borovoy emphasized its qualitative irreplaceability and uniqueness. And this qualitative definiteness, the wholeness of the personality (Dostoevsky, as well as the 'ordinary mortal') is not just dead 'isms,' dogmas, roles and social determinants, not even separate 'thoughts,' but contradictions, torments, a living, not fitting into frames and not objectified Spirit. Therefore, 'On the contrary, it is precisely where crystal palaces will delight hungry eyes, where life will be regulated according to the wisest human recipes, it is precisely there that the elements of tragedy will speak with incredible, unusual force for us. […] With the elimination of problems, actually structural (techno-economic, socio-political, etc.), there will arise, and already with urgent urgency—because there are no and cannot be any further postponements—the most difficult problems, the problems of the spirit.'[94] For man is spirit, the goal of life is in motion, truth is always personal, and suffering is inevitable and beneficial. Truly human problems—existential problems of the spirit (death, the meaning of life, love)—are eternal and not reducible to the social. Therefore, the contradiction of Dostoevsky's world is not something external, transient—it is the contradiction of life itself, of the human soul itself.

The most important thing in a person escapes definition, is not derived from anything—as Borovoy argued in a Sartrean way. And he, following Dostoevsky, preaches: "refusal to refer to 'independent circumstances'" and "eliminates excuses—birth, environment, the play of the elements. Personality, its will, freedom, awareness in the choice of means—the decisive factors of action. No one can shed their personal responsibility."[95] Dostoevsky warned about this with

great force, Borovoy reminds us: "His 'underground man' is - an irresistible, murderous criticism of Enlightenment rationalism, which has come up with a 'mechanism' and 'causality' and at the same time 'infantilely' 'purely', 'innocently' believed that a person does evil only because he 'does not know his true interests.'"[96]

Borovoy, with incredible courage, wrote in his book about Dostoevsky: "This is communism, in the words of Herzen, 'Russian autocracy inside out,' communism-Arakcheevshchina, conceived from above, carried out dogmatically, naively believing that the harmony and happiness of the whole can be achieved by emasculating the peculiarity in the human, dreaming of a single, rational and standard existence, with predetermination of ideas, emotions, aspirations, intolerant of independent searches. […] Communism-parody, growing not from the will and victory of the oppressed, but from the brain of a doctrinaire, sacrificing the real to chimeras. Man is meat, manure, a low-quality unit, allowing any manipulation over himself. In the light of such a dogma, the formula—'the worse, the better,' naturally, receives an accurate justification; the concept of 'historical necessity' is invested with an arbitrary non-historical meaning; dogmatically decreed reality becomes reasonable."[97]

What, about whom are these bitter words of Borovoy, written in the mid-1930s? Is it only about "Shigalyevshchina" in Dostoevsky? Borovoy—without mentioning the USSR, Stalin and Lenin, speaking only about Dostoevsky, discusses personality, life, freedom, challenging totalitarianism with its executioners, censors, ideologists and serfs, with its brazen "simplicity," which is "worse than theft."

Notes

1 Михайловский Н.К. Литературная критика и воспоминания. – М., 1995. С. 50, 53.

2 Кропоткин П.А. Идеалы и действительность в русской литературе // Кропоткин П.А. Анархия, ее философия, ее идеал. Сочинения. – М., 1999. С. 433.

3 Рябов П.В. Философия Ф.М. Достоевского в интерпретации А.А. Борового (по архивным материалам) // Вестник Орловского государственного университета. Серия: новые гуманитарные исследования. 2012. № 4; Рябов П.В. Романтический анархизм Алексея Борового (из истории русской философии жизни) // Историко-философский ежегодник 2011. – М., 2013.

4 (РГАЛИ, Ф.1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113)

5 Боровой А.А. Моя жизнь. Воспоминания. Глава III. РГАЛИ. Ф.1023. Оп. 1. Д. 164. Л. 95 – 96.

6 Ibid. Главы XVIII – XXV. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 170. Л. 38.

7 Ibid. Глава XI. РГАЛИ, Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 168. Л. 173; главы XVIII – XXV. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 170. Л. 168, 378 – 379; главы XXVI – XXXI. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 171. Л. 85.

8 Ibid. Глава I. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 162. Л. 18, 20.

9 Ibid. Л. 23 – 26.

10 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 12 апреля 1928 – 22 января 1932. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 173. Л. 136 об. – 137.

11 Ibid. Л. 146 – 147.

12 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 30 января 1932 – 21 февраля 1933. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 174. Л .6 об. – 15.

13 See also: Боровой А.А. Статьи времен Первой мировой войны в «Утре России». РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 68. Л. 97.

14 Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 30 об., 32 об. And in the memoirs: '...only petty malice, servile jealousy, the blindness of a fanatic' see 'in Dostoevsky – the ideologist of autocracy and Orthodoxy.' (Боровой А.А. Моя жизнь. Воспоминания. Глава I. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 162. Л. 26.) About the same: Боровой А.А. Дневник. 20 января 1934 – 21 ноября 1935. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 177. Л. 39; Боровой А.А. Моя жизнь. Воспоминания. Черновые наброски и главы, исключенные автором из рукописи. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 172. Л. 45 об.

15 Боровой А.А. Разговоры о живом и мертвом. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 108. Л. 68 – 68 об.

16 Ibid. Л. 82 об. – 83, 109, 140 – 141, 163, 165 – 165 об., 269 – 271, 272, 320, 329 – 339.

17 Боровой А.А. Моя жизнь. Воспоминания. Главы XXVI – XXXI. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 171. Л. 202.
18 Debate on Bakunin and Dostoevsky. Articles by L.P. Grossman and Vyach. Polonsky. – Л., 1926. For a contemporary overview of this heated debate, see: Goodwin J. *Confronting Dostoevsky's Demons. Anarchism and the Specter of Bakunin in Twentieth-Century Russia*. – N. Y., 2010.
19 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 12 апреля 1928 – 22 января 1932. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 173. Л. 149.
20 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 30 января 1932 – 21 февраля 1933. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 174. Л. 4.
21 Боровой А., Отверженный Н. Миф о Бакунине. – М., 1925. С. 71 – 148; Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 311 – 349.
22 Отверженный Н. Штирнер и Достоевский. (С предисловием А. Борового). М., 1925.
23 The preface is given here almost in full, with some abbreviations.
24 A. Borovoy's book "Dostoevsky" has already been announced in the "Printed and soon to be published" section of "Voices of Labor" (see: Кропоткин П.А. Этика. Т. I. Пб.; М., 1922).
25 Things are not as straightforward as Borovoy presents them here. Of course, he called himself an atheist and opposed anarcho-mystics. He considered the recognition of the transcendent, following Max Stirner, to be a form of 'fetishism,' and proclaimed anarchism as a consistently anti-religious philosophy. However, as a romantic who perceives Life in a pantheistic way, he was not alien to an unconscious, spontaneous mysticism in his worldview.
26 Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 3.
27 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 12 апреля 1928 – 22 января 1932. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 173. Л. 81., see also. Л. 87.
28 The tragedy of the world view, piercing personalism and protest against the "socialization" of the individual bring Borovy closer to the reflections of both Dostoevsky and M. Unamuno and J.-P. Sartre. And his understanding of Ivan Karamazov's rebellion against the meaninglessness of the world as the source of human dignity resembles the ideas of Albert Camus (see also: Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 21 – 23).
29 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 30 января 1932 – 21 февраля 1933. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 174. Л. 24.
30 Ibid. Л. 55.
31 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 20 января 1934 – 21 ноября 1935. РГАЛИ.

Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 177. Л. 63 об.

32 Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 20.

33 He writes with sadness about the perception of Dostoevsky: "… he is least known in the circles of "revolutionaries." The stigma of "reactionary" – left his work under wraps for the revolutionary intelligentsia. He is completely unknown to the proletarian masses… For 3 or 4 years, immediately after the October Revolution, I, in connection with my work on Dostoevsky, systematically questioned students and "revolutionaries" known to me – who is [sic] Svidrigailov. Out of 10 questioned, 9 responded that they had never heard this name. Meanwhile, "Crime and Punishment" has always been among the most read novels of Dostoevsky." (Ibid. Л. 30).

34 Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 139.

35 Ibid. Л. 90 об., 94 об.

36 Ibid. Л. 58.

37 Ibid. Л. 70.

38 Ibid. Л. 53.

39 Ibid.

40 Borovoy angrily asked: "Was Dostoevsky and could he have been, even for one day, a general? Could he have been a high-ranking official? When could he afford the luxury of a prolonged rest? The comfort of his surroundings? What rank and title could have stopped his sarcasm? His death gathered at the coffin all that was in the then Petersburg society – the young, progressive, protesting." (Ibid. Л. 96).

41 Ibid. Л. 63 – 64 об. See also: Л. 59, 83 об.

42 Ibid. Л. 30.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid. Л. 175.

45 26 June 1932, Borovoy, like Karamazov, 'declares rebellion' in his diary: '... remembering his double slavery - biological and sociological [about old age and exile. - P. R.] ... But I cannot sing hosannas ... No, practical ... this wisdom does not penetrate me, my practical mind rejects it, not recognizing any corrective coefficients - age, culture, environment, instructive examples, the promise of rewards in a classless paradise, etc., etc.' (Боровой А.А. Дневник. 30 января 1932 – 21 февраля 1933. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 174. Л. 31 – 31 об). And in Borovoy's book we read: 'The "rebellion" of the Karamazovs is the apotheosis of human denial, the apotheosis of heroic existential pessimism, the limit of the human dialectic's raving against the world.' (Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 23, 87).

46 Ibid. Л. 6 – 7, 8, 65, 73, 121 об., 164, 167 – 168. In the diary, see entries for September 20 and October 26, 1933. (Боровой А.А. Дневник. 24 августа 1933 – 17 января 1934. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 176. Л. 14, 29). See also in The article outlines: Боровой А.А. [Об анархизме]. Материалы к статьям. Заметки, выписки, конспекты. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 145. Л. 130. For a lengthy discussion of the «gentleman» see in «Разговорах о живом и мертвом»: Боровой А.А. Разговоры о живом и мертвом. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 108. Л. 165 – 165 об. This fragment (with corrections) was included in the book "Dostoevsky" (см.: Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ, Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 6 – 7).

47 Боровой А.А. Моя жизнь. Воспоминания. Главы VI – X. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 167. Л. 19.

48 See: Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 5.

49 Ibid. Л. 30 об., 31.

50 Ibid. Л. 175 об., 177, 182.

51 For a vivid integral (social, psychological and ethical) characterization of the bourgeoisie as a historical and non-historical phenomenon, see: Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 99 – 102.

52 Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 4.

53 Ibid. Л. 66.

54 Ibid. Л. 118.

55 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 12 апреля 1928 – 22 января 1932. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 173. Л. 80 – 80 об.

56 "An interesting study on the polyphonic nature of Dostoevsky's novels was written relatively recently." (Бахтин М.М. Проблемы творчества Досто евского. – Л., 1929.) Quoted from: Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант.
РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 81 – 81 об.). On Dostoevsky's polyphony, see also: Ibid. Л. 4 – 5, 27, 39, 168 – 169, 173.

57 Ibid. Л. 81 об.

58 Ibid. Л. 68.

59 Ibid. Л. 81 об. – 82

60 Ibid. Л. 13 об.

61 Ibid. Л. 175, 116.

62 Ibid. Л. 117, 118.

63 Ibid. Л. 27, 28.

64 Ibid. Л. 67.

65 Ibid. Л. 8.
66 Боровой А.А. Дневник. 12 апреля 1928 – 22 января 1932. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023.
Оп. 1. Д. 173. Л. 143 –144 об.
67 Ibid. Л. 8 об. And in his diary on September 2, 1932, Borovoy wrote: "Dostoevsky had to drink everything to the bottom in order to find suffering and truth at the bottom." (Боровой А.А. Дневник. 30 января 1932 – 21 февраля 1933. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 174. Л. 41).
68 In Dostoevsky's books, Borovoy finds both Pascal's "abyss of infinity" and Nietzsche's horror of "eternal return" without a goal: "The human brain, logic, dialectics are powerless against the most powerful dialectics of the "abyss", which overturns any teleology. The pitiful convulsions of a bug." (Боровой А.А. Достоевский. Книга. Последний вариант. РГАЛИ. Ф. 1023. Оп. 1. Д. 113. Л. 12 об.) He wrote about Karamazov's rebellion against the absurdity of life and the horror of death, unable to be satisfied with social perfection: "But what are these pitiful attempts to explain the senselessness and insatiability of human suffering compared to the fundamental, irresistible thought of the senselessness of our very existence, of its imposition, its doom. We people are only a moment of universal existence; our will, our goals perish without a trace in the world cycle, unknowable to us." (Ibid. Л. 12). But, like Camus, Borovoy came to accept life.
69 Ibid. Л. 8 об.
70 Ibid. Л. 12 об.
71 Ibid. Л. 74 об.
72 Ibid. Л. 4.
73 Ibid. Л. 10.
74 For example, see. Ibid. Л. 61 об.
75 Ibid. Л. 15.
76 Ibid. Л. 122.
77 Ibid. Л. 112 об.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid. Л. 116.
80 Ibid. Л. 120.
81 Ibid. Л. 116 об.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid. Л. 121.
84 Ibid. Л. 9.
85 Ibid. Л. 6 – 7.
86 Ibid. Л. 7.
87 Ibid. Л. 66 об.
88 Ibid. Л. 165.

89 Ibid. Л. 179.
90 For a detailed critique of the "theory of progress" by Borovoy, see Ibid. Л. 161 – 174.
91 Ibid. Л. 29 об.
92 Ibid. Л. 163, 164.
93 Ibid. Л. 57 об.
94 Ibid. Л. 9.
95 Ibid. Л. 57 об.; Л. 174.
96 Ibid. 127 об.
97 Ibid. Л.146 – 146 об.