

years in this country to higher studies, ministry, academic teaching, and critical scholarship.

He was thoroughly familiar with two vast fields: the Czech Reform movement in his native Bohemia, and Eastern Orthodoxy, especially in Russia. Qualified by theological studies and a wide command of languages, he was able to draw from sources accessible to not many scholars of his generation, and produced original contributions. It is no more than an academic question whether he was attracted more by the Czech Reform or the lot of Orthodoxy under the hammer and sickle. Czech spiritual heroes, John Hus and John Amos Comenius, appealed to him directly; when he dealt with them he needed no mediator. But the representatives of Russian religious thought exerted irresistible attraction, for they were living representatives of the contemporary struggle in which Spinka was emotionally involved. There are several contributions from Spinka's pen to elucidate the life and thought of John Hus. His translation of Hus's letters appeared posthumously. Spinka's translation of *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* by Comenius inaugurated in 1972 the Michigan Slavic Translations series. But the books on the fate of Eastern Orthodoxy after 1917 were topical and appealed to a much wider audience than the monographs on Bohemia. There was little at that time in English on the church and the Russian Revolution or the church in Soviet Russia. The book *Nicholas Berdayev: The Captive of Freedom* was acclaimed as a summary of a theologian-thinker for whom Spinka felt spiritual kinship.

No survey of Slavic studies in this country can omit Spinka's name. His place was among the pioneers. He took his task seriously and published not only an impressive collection of books but also a large number of articles, book reviews, and translations. He served for several years as editor of *Church History* and appeared on many panels, contributing constructively and debating vigorously. And he was a cooperative colleague, ready to help, especially to students who had the courage to leave the beaten track and explore unconventional topics.

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BORIS O. UNBEGAUN, 1898–1973

Unbegaun began his career as a librarian at the Institut d'Études Slaves, Paris. His first major publication was the extremely useful *Catalogue des périodiques slaves et relatifs aux études slaves des bibliothèques de Paris* (1929). He was a great master of what the French call *bibliographie raisonnée*. His later *Bibliographical Guide to the Russian Language* (1953) is a masterpiece of this genre, and his annual surveys of publications on Russian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian in the *Revue des études slaves* (1928–68) were a feat of industry and knowledge. They shaped research in these fields more than it may seem possible.

But the real Boris Unbegaun began in 1935, with his *La langue russe au XVI^e siècle: La flexion des noms*. The title of the book does not do justice to its contents. It is actually an entire history of the Russian declension seen from the vantage point of its crucial middle point, amazing in its organization, precision, and synthetic value. Neither in this book nor in any other did Unbegaun contribute to proliferation of linguistic terminology. With Turgot, he could have said: "Des

hommes grossiers ne font rien de simple. Il faut des hommes perfectionnés pour y arriver." Yet the book was essentially structuralist and refreshing in its method.

A series of articles on the history of individual words started, in 1929, with the one on the name of St. Petersburg. Family names, loan translations, interplay of Church Slavonic forms with Western influences, card terminology, law terminology, names of exotic animals, et al., were subjects of his subsequent articles. Richly documented, they are histories of words, not etymologies. They are indispensable in what will one day be the science of Russian historical lexicology, a not-yet existing discipline.

The Church Slavonic source of literary Russian was Unbegaun's favorite subject during his last years, a refutation of superpatriotic exaggerations of Soviet scholars such as Obnorsky. Impressionistic in approach, these reconnoiterings into a vast field are vulnerable, but no one can deny that they let in much fresh air in the staleness which prevailed in this area of research.

Modern Russian interested Unbegaun no less than Russian of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. He brought new observations and solutions to the study of indeclinable substantives in 1947, of substantivized adjectives in 1948, and others, and his *Grammaire russe* of 1951 (many later editions, including the English version) combined popular presentation with many new insights.

His last book, *Russian Surnames* (Oxford, 1972), is in a sense a summary of his scholarly life: a subject in which linguistics and history of civilization meet, a mirror of Russia's social and cultural growth and limitations, in an almost incredible combination of stupendous erudition with clarity and popularity of presentation.

The harmony of Unbegaun's research and his personality is stunning. The impact of his studies and teaching on old and young scholars in the Slavic field was significant, and so was the impact of his personality. A man of German ancestry and religion, Russian culture, and French education, he was brought up first in Russia and Slovenia, and he taught in Belgium, France, America (Columbia University and New York University), and England. He knew how to appreciate and enjoy every country in which he dwelt, but his heart clearly belonged to England, that land in which democracy seemed not to be divorced from hierarchic values. It was there that he bought a house, published his last books, and wished to be buried. Oxford with its centuries-old traditions of intellectual advance, of molding everyday life into conventional casts, synthesis of past and present, and genuine merriment within and without this framework—that Oxford was the capital of his world, truly cosmopolitan or at least pan-European as it was.

His benevolent acceptance of human foibles, the perfection of his manners, and the discipline of his reactions secured him an almost general acceptance from Moscow to Kansas City in spite of his talent, knowledge, and intellectual superiority—features which people rarely forgive in their contemporaries. He never built cliques or factions of eulogists, he never organized laudatory reviews of his books nor denigrating campaigns against his adversaries. He despised such methods and their perpetrators. His was the world of Memling and Rogier van der Weyden (his favorite artists), that is, of clarity, precision, honesty, and dignity, not the world of, say, Bosch or Brueghel.

He enjoyed immensely his popularity as lecturer, writer, host. He took his successes and setbacks with the sad humor of a wise man and the playfulness of a child. He loved his medals, decorations (French Légion d'honneur, Belgian Grand Léopold, and many more), and ranks, the masquerades of academic rituals and

processions all the same as he loved a peculiar doll he had brought from Madeira, beer glasses with universities' coats of arms he collected, and curious manifestations of human bizarreness like the name "Chinese Ratskeller" of a New York restaurant whose sign he photographed and liked to show to his friends. This unique combination of integrity, sense of style and of duty, understanding of people and epochs, playful humor and sense of relativity (which never led to nihilism) marked equally his life and his writings and made both so much his own and because of that so much of all of us.

The list of his publications up to 1967 can be found in his continental Festschrift (Université Libre de Bruxelles, *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, vol. 18, 1968). The English-speaking countries honored him with *Studies in Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* (New York University Press, 1968).

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