

## Popular Science Summary

### *“A Real Breath of Fresh Air Blew Over the Whole Country: The Apology of War in Russian Philosophical Thought of the 19th and First Half of the 20th Century”*

#### Introduction

“A real breath of fresh air,” “a purifying fire,” “the forging of a new man” – these are just a few of the metaphors used by Russian philosophers in the 19th and 20th centuries to convey the meaning and essence of war while expressing their attitudes toward this historical phenomenon. These examples are neither anomalies nor ideological curiosities within Russian thought. On the contrary, they represent an inexhaustible tradition of philosophical apologies for war – a tradition as old as Russian philosophy itself.

The apology of war, which can just as well be described as an open fascination with and advocacy for war, was an integral element of the worldview of many Russian thinkers, particularly those with conservative-religious leanings, but also among Marxists and anarchists. Their theses, often disseminated by authorities, profoundly influenced the national consciousness of many Russian and Soviet citizens.

#### Research Gap

Despite the significance of this issue, existing studies on Russian philosophy have not yet addressed it in a systematic and comprehensive manner. This does not mean that literature on Russian war philosophy is absent; on the contrary, there is a substantial amount. However, these texts are typically journalistic, incidental, or focus on narrow aspects of the topic (e.g., in relation to World War I).

#### Scope of Research and Methods

This project aims to fill this gap by conducting a systematic analysis, reconstruction, and understanding of the essence of the apology of war as expressed in the works of Russian philosophers from the early 19th to the mid-20th century. The research, rooted in the history of ideas and supported by hermeneutics, historical semantics, and the sociology of knowledge, will examine the writings of 15 eminent Russian philosophers. These include Slavophiles Alexei Khomyakov and Ivan Aksakov; the novelist and “organic conservative” (*pochvennic*) Fyodor Dostoevsky; the radical traditionalist Konstantin Leontiev; religious thinkers Vladimir Solovyov, Vasily Rozanov, Eugene Trubetskoy, Sergei Bulgakov, Nikolai Berdyaev, Semyon Frank, and Vladimir Ern; the symbolist Vyacheslav Ivanov; the anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin; the Marxist Georgi Plekhanov; and the nationalist ideologist Ivan Ilyin.

Reconstructing their war narratives will enable further typological analyses. The project will classify these narratives according to ideological affiliations (e.g., nationalist, conservative, religious, mystical/eschatological, anarchist, revolutionary) and historical contexts (e.g., peacetime, the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, the Russo-Turkish Wars, the Russo-Japanese War, the World Wars, and the Russian revolutions). It will also focus on understanding the dynamics of their evolution in relation to battlefield developments.

Finally, the study will synthesize findings to reveal the role of war in Russian philosophy and the influence of pro-war philosophy on society and state policy.

#### Significance of the Project

Analyzing the Russian apology of war and the complex of ideas underlying it is crucial for understanding the intellectual history of Russia, not only in the 19th and 20th centuries but also in its contemporary continuations, which often draw on these old traditions. Furthermore, by addressing a significant research gap, this project makes a vital contribution to the study of the history of ideas, political philosophy, and the role of ideology in shaping collective consciousness – particularly in authoritarian and totalitarian states.