
NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

DMYTRO IVANOVYCH CHYZHEVS'KYI, 1894–1977

This eminent Slavist, whose work has been very influential in many areas of Slavic studies during the last fifty years, died on April 18, 1977 in Heidelberg. Chyzhevs'kyi (more often spelled Tschizewskij or Čiževsky) was born on March 23, 1894 in Oleksandria, Ukraine. After studying at the University of St. Petersburg (1911–13) he graduated from Kiev University in 1919. After the revolution he left the Ukraine and continued his studies in Germany, where, in Freiburg, he obtained a Ph.D. in philosophy. His dissertation dealt with Hegel's influence on Russian thought and later appeared in book form. Among his teachers in Germany were Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, and Martin Heidegger. His teaching in the Slavic field began in Prague in 1924, where he became a docent and later professor at the Free Ukrainian University. From 1932 he taught at Halle University where he remained until 1945. From 1935 to 1937 he also taught at the University of Jena. In 1945 Chyzhevs'kyi became professor of Slavic languages at Marburg University, a post which he held until 1951 when he went, as visiting professor, to Harvard (1951–56). From 1956 until his retirement he was professor at Heidelberg as well as (from 1968 on) at Cologne. He was awarded several honorary degrees and was a member of many scholarly academies and societies. Surviving him are his widow, Dr. Lydia Marshak-Cizevska and a daughter, Professor Tatiana Cizevska.

It is, of course, impossible to give even a short account of his work in a brief obituary. Chyzhevs'kyi's contribution to Slavic studies has indeed been monumental. He was a Slavist *par excellence*, for he was as much at home in Czech and Slovak literature as in Russian and Ukrainian; he was a literary critic and historian as well as a linguist and philosopher. The breadth of his knowledge was phenomenal, and he had the rare gift of grasping the essential and relating his findings in a new and illuminating way. To students of Russian literature Chyzhevs'kyi gave his brilliant analyses of Gogol, Pushkin, and Dostoevsky; to those in Ukrainian studies his history of Ukrainian philosophy and studies of Skovoroda and Panteleimon Kulish; in the West Slavic area there were his works on Comenius, Štur, and Mickiewicz. Of prime importance are his studies on the influence of Hegel and Schiller in Russia, the Baroque in Slavic literatures, and a comparative history of Slavic literatures which appeared in an English translation in 1971. This authoritative work shows Chyzhevs'kyi's preoccupation with the styles and genres of literature which was so evident not only in his other critical studies but also in his discussions of realism, formalism, futurism, and literary parody. This emphasis never led him to a narrow formalistic approach but, on the contrary, was combined with a continuing exploration of *Geistesgeschichte*. Speaking to his students in 1964, Chyzhevs'kyi warned them against becoming narrow Slavic specialists and praised the German university system which demanded of them a *Nebenfach* (a "minor"). Only a wide knowledge of languages and ideas, he argued, can lead to true scholarship, advice which cannot be repeated too often. He himself felt that his own work would be best appreciated by the Czechs (his studies of Comenius, of Church Slavic literature in Bohemia, and of medieval Czech songs). On the other hand, throughout his life he believed he was undervalued by his own countrymen, though his prodigious contribution to Ukrainian scholarship may now become apparent to many through the recently translated history of Ukrainian literature.

It would be foolish, however, to regard Chyzhevs'kyi as belonging to this or that national group. Although always aware of his native roots, he was a truly cosmopolitan European—so much so that his American interlude was not entirely happy. He was an exemplar of the finest international tradition of European scholarship and his works will continue to play a seminal role among Slavic scholars as long as this tradition remains alive.

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