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Alexander Nikolayevich Radishchev and Destiny of Russian Enlightenment*

*I looked about me – my heart was troubled by the sufferings of humanity.
I turned my eyes inward – I saw that man's woes arise in man himself,
and frequently only because he does not look straight
at the objects around him.*

Alexander Nikolayevich Radishchev

There are issues and questions that are impossible to cover within the scope of a paper or a conference contribution. One of such issues is also the destiny of the Russian Enlightenment and, within its context, the works of Alexander Nikolayevich Radishchev (1749–1802). For this reason, the present pa-

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per is the first one of the intended three text phases, three papers, resulting from my effort to contribute to a deeper recognition of problematics of the Russian Enlightenment.

In this paper, I attempt to outline the main framework as well as problematic attitudes associated with a motive of Enlightenment in the Russian milieu. I will introduce the main periodization landmarks of formation of the Enlightenment thinking in Russia, and also distinctive moments linked with the formation of this thinking, which exceed the framework of announced periodization.

I intend to describe Radishchev's position in Enlightenment thinking and to emphasize those moments within his biography which are instantly reflected in his teaching, his creative journeys, and the cultural background of the period. I intend to point out the central motive of his teaching that is – as I see it – man. He deals with a question of shaping a man and his education. He is interested in the status of a man in society, and how society influences man and also how man forms life in society. Education, along with social, state and legal questions, constitutes fundamental levels of his reflections on man. In this paper, I pay central attention to the question of educating and shaping a man as a fully-fledged and happily living individual, who, in his view, represents a bearing pillar of society.

In conclusion, I will briefly give an overview to an issue of so-called two punishments of Radishchev, namely, the reaction to his works in the Russian environment of the period which was fundamentally determined by the authority of Empress Catherine the Great, as well as the reception in subsequent history of the Russian, or more precisely, the Soviet thinking.

I suppose it will enable me to point out the second dominant attitude to the question of man – the state-legal attitude, and thus, the conclusion of this paper will provide a good introduction to the second phase of my exposition of the Russian Enlightenment in the next paper. The intended second paper will also focus on, besides Radishchev's Enlightenment opinions on the state, law, and society, an analysis of the narrative strategy chosen by this representative of Enlightenment.

My exploration of problematics of the Russian Enlightenment follows primarily from works of historians of the Russian philosophy such as Andrzej Walicki¹, Frederick Copleston² or Ján Komorovský³, and Olga I. Eliseeva⁴.

Regarding Radishchev's original writings, I begin with his most essential work, *A Journey From St. Petersburg to Moscow*⁵, and also his treatise *On Man, His Mortality, His Immortality*⁶.

While trying to determine the timeline for the Russian Enlightenment development, an agreement could be identified in the works of Walicki⁷ and Copleston⁸, namely, that initial frameworks of Enlightenment thinking in Russia had been formed for several decades. Within this period, which could be called pre-Enlightenment, it is necessary to confront the legacy of Peter the Great.

His impact and influence in different fields of Russian life is the subject of frequent expert and also non-professional evaluations.

Assessment of his influence on the formation of philosophical thinking in Russia may be confronted with two attitudes.

The first one is greatly expressed by the categorical statement of Frederic Copleston: "Peter the Great was certainly not a philosopher"⁹. It is clear that this opinion gives no evidence regarding the nature of his influence, but represents an excellent illustration of the nature of one of the profiled attitudes to this issue. However, the continuation of Copleston's thoughts on Peter the Great's intentional influence on the formation of the philosophical thinking is of a more distinctive value: "He was primarily interested in promising young Russians acquiring scientific and technological knowledge and

¹ Andrzej Walicki, *Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od oświecenia do renesansu religijno-filozoficznego* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2005).

² Frederick Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia. From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

³ Ján Komorovský, "Alexander Nikolajevič Radiščev. Biografická poznámka", in: Alexander Nikolajevič Radiščev, *Cestovanie z Petrohradu do Moskvy* (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov, 2010).

⁴ Olga Igorevna Jelisiejewa, *Radiszczew*. (Moskwa: Mołodaja gwardija, 2015).

⁵ Rus. *Puteshestviye iz Peterburga v Moskvu*.

⁶ Rus. *O cheloveke, o yego smertnosti i bessmertii*.

⁷ Walicki, *Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od oświecenia do renesansu religijno-filozoficznego*.

⁸ Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*.

⁹ Ibidem, 15.

in the formation of properly educated bureaucrats for his civil service. But his opening to the West obviously meant that Western philosophical, social and political ideas would eventually come to influence the minds of the educated layer of society¹⁰. Thus, Copleston sees penetration of philosophical thoughts as a secondary and certainly indirect product of Peter the Great's activity as a statesman which led to building up the powerful empire.

Also, for Andrzej Walicki the extent to which instigation to philosophical thinking was the direct intention of Peter the Great is questionable. In his view, the following attitude is emphasized: "In his conversation with Patriarch Adrian (in 1700) regarding the necessity of changes in Moscow's Slavic Greek Latin Academy, Peter I completely avoided religious questions. He suggested totally eliminate theology and philosophy from school educational programme and replace them with the teaching of practical disciplines: medicine, civil engineering..."¹¹. Walicki leans his comments on the fact that the transformation of old tsarist Russia to the empire initiated by Peter I concerned mainly functionally oriented modernization of the country, its economics, and army. In this respect, Walicki's reflections are similar to those of Copleston. However, it is necessary to add that, on the other hand, Walicki also takes into account the following: "Peter I was the first Russian tsar, who considered himself being a servant of the state, and saw general welfare as the aim of his activity"¹². In his interpretation, Walicki also mentions the fact that thinkers such as Theophan Prokopovich (1681–1736), a Kiev Academy graduate, or Vasily N. Tatishchev (1686–1750), a historian, both conversant with the Enlightenment thought, were close collaborators and advisers of Peter I. Walicki adds that, with his legendary idea of opening the door or window towards the West, Peter I undoubtedly created a space for the formation of the Enlightenment thinking in Russia. At least, Enlightenment thinkers ideas started to get to Russia, where they found their readers and attentive recipients.

I would say that both attitudes show the tendency to approach the question of the extent to which Peter I contributed to the development of philo-

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Walicki, *Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od oświecenia do renesansu religijno-filozoficznego*, 25.

¹² Ibidem, 30.

sophical thought in Russia, unsystematically. Nevertheless, in neither case should it be understood as a negation of fundamentality of this period for shaping the initial frameworks and atmosphere for accompanying the formation of the Enlightenment thinking. In contrast to Copleston, Walicki is not so categorical in his assessment of the philosophical background of Peter I. Thus, Walicki's attitude can be perceived as more moderate, the one that enables searching for the Enlightenment spirit in the process of the real state changes of the period within the stances of Peter the Great.

With no significant disagreements, the major development period of the Enlightenment thinking used to be associated with a period of Catherine II reign between 1762 and 1774, or up to 1789¹³.

It is a period when Catherine the Great herself openly avowed the Enlightenment thought, chiefly of the French provenance: "She tried to make of French Enlightenment philosophy a tool of her own politics, domestic as well as foreign"¹⁴. She considered herself to be a pupil of the French Enlightenment, and especially of Montesquieu. She highly evaluated his work entitled *The Spirit of the Laws*. She regarded that work as her "prayer book"¹⁵. She carried on intensive correspondence with Diderot and Voltaire. Diderot even made use of Catherine the Great's invitation and in 1773 he spent five months in St. Petersburg keeping relatively intensive contact with the Empress. However, the visit adversely influenced Diderot as Catherine II expected. Diderot was dejected by St. Petersburg.

During that period, Catherine II attempted to come into contact also with Rousseau, but he adamantly refused her offers to support his creative activities. As noticed by Walicki in his *opus magnum*, it seemed Rousseau was afraid his name and authority would be misused by the other authority, the authority of Catherine II, which he was contemptuous of because of its nature and origin as well.

Also, the following note by Walicki confirms the central status of Catherine II in the formation of the Enlightenment thinking: "It is even possible to say that her role was in a certain sense central – not because of her 'philosophy',

¹³ Overall reign of Catherine II was between 1762–1796.

¹⁴ Walicki, *Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od oświecenia do renesansu religijno-filozoficznego*, 37–38.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 39.

but due to fact that all more significant Russian thinkers, who were her contemporaries, tried to comment on her conception and led with her hidden or direct polemics¹⁶. As can be seen, Catherine II is perceived as an influential, even determinant intellectual and philosophical authority of the period who not only made an effort to problematize the Enlightenment thought but also to implement it. The status of Catherine II as an arbiter in social and philosophical issues will be consolidated later.

However, in my view, worth emphasizing is the fact that Radishchev's life, his attitudes and works, are situated in this period as well. Thus, most important biographic moments of Radishchev's life which resulted in the publication of his *Journey* should now be approached.

Already during her Moscow coronation (1762), Catherine II issued an order by which a so-called pageboy body involving forty members was established¹⁷. Radishchev was one of them. He was among those sent by Catherine II to study abroad, to Leipzig, in order to receive legal education.

For Radishchev, the moment when a book was given to him by some Russian traveller turned out to be very important in his life. The gift was *De l'Esprit, or Essays on the Mind and Its Several Faculties* by Helvétius Komorovský¹⁸ described reading that work as the key moment in shaping Radishchev's own independent thinking. It also encouraged him to study such Enlightenment thinkers as Rousseau or Diderot.

In 1771, Radishchev returned to his homeland. He experienced the most liberal atmosphere of Catherine II reign. He entered the environment saturated with Montesquieu's *The spirit of the Laws*. However, and at the same time, he sensitively perceived the reality of everyday life which was in sharp contrast with the picture Catherine II tried to present to Diderot and others. This evident contrast as well as his interest in the fate of Russia, resulted in Radishchev's 18-year long journey during which his most influential work *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* was written. During his journey between these two capitals of Russia, he was writing the work in the form of a book of travels, full of imaginary elements in various depictions. Regard-

¹⁶ Ibidem, 38.

¹⁷ Komorovský, "Alexander Nikolajevič Radiščev".

¹⁸ Ibidem.

ing the genre, as emphasized by Komorovský¹⁹, Radishchev was influenced by Guillaume Raynal's work, *A History of the Two Indies*²⁰.

Radishchev was writing also during the first great social upheaval in Russia ruled by Catherine II: the insurrection led by Yemelyan Pugachev in 1773–1774. After that period, Catherine II had to revise or reevaluate thoughts and intentions of Enlightenment. In 1789, after the French Revolution, Catherine's doubts gained reactionary character expressed in a radical form. In the same year, Radishchev was finishing his work on *A Journey*.

On 22nd July 1789, Radishchev was given a permission to publish his book, *A Journey*, from Nikita Ryleyev, a superintendent and a chairman of the censorship committee in St. Petersburg.

Radishchev secured a printing machine and established a printing office in his house. He started to print in January 1790. As Komorovský²¹ informs, there were about 650 exemplars of *A Journey* printed, but only 32–70 exemplars were distributed. To this day, there are only 17 exemplars of the first edition preserved.

The final period of the formation of Enlightenment in Russian milieu, also called post-Enlightenment, is associated mainly with the reactionary part of Catherine's reign up to her death, and subsequently, with the reign of her grandson, Alexander I. Important milestones which usually close the Russian Enlightenment are the events of 1825 – the Decembrist Revolt and Nicolas succession.

As I outlined in the introduction of this paper, it is possible to approach Enlightenment in Russian milieu also from a different perspective, besides the periodization. It is possible to identify several peculiarities that may even exceed the frameworks of mentioned periodization.

The abovementioned criterion certainly supports the approach to Enlightenment as some kind of an intellectual symbol, as something that should have clear content, although the opposite was the truth. The term Enlightenment in the Russian environment often represents the whole rationalistic tradition of the European thinking beginning with the Cartesian vision up to those

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Fr. *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770).

²¹ Komorovský, "Alexander Nikolajevič Radiščev".

presented by Kant and Hegel, including thoughts of the British provenance. Secularism or even impiety is also an affiliated addition to the rationalism of Enlightenment understood in this way.

Regarding the peculiarities accompanying Enlightenment formation in Russia, we could also say that Enlightenment became a fashionable symbol, mainly in the circles on Catherine the Great court. Copleston depicted this moment in an interesting way: “It was during the reign of Catherine II (1762–96), commonly known as Catherine the Great, that the idea of the French Enlightenment became fashionable with those members of the gentry who liked to think of themselves as mentally emancipated”²². Further, he adds that there “arose the movement which has been described as Russian Voltaireanism. To a considerable extent it was a question of a vogue, of a dilettante playing with Western ideas and theories”²³. In the context of the Russian Voltaireanism, we can also add that this designation gained derisive meaning in the history of philosophy.

Enlightenment thoughts resonated naturally also as a tradition in Russian academic milieu, on the ground of Theological Academies as well as on the ground of secular The Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences and Imperial Moscow University. Such kind of education was developed by personalities such as Jacob Kozielski (1728–1793), a professor at Moscow University, Dmitry Anichkov (1733–1788) or Semyon Desnitsky (1740–1798), a professor of law and Adam Ferguson’s student. Just in Kozielski’s works, the authority of Christian Wolf’s metaphysics is eliminated and subject to criticism through the ideas presented by Voltaire, Rousseau, or Montesquieu. This aspect is not introduced as a peculiarity of Russian milieu, but as a moment supplementing the overview of an environment in which the Enlightenment thinking was developed.

However, the hallmark of peculiarity can be certainly found in the Enlightenment thinking developed independently in official circles, in the environment of educated, mainly nobility circles which had a great impact on further formation of philosophical thinking in Russia. Walicki emphasizes the importance of this element: “The situation had radically changed during

²² Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, 17.

²³ *Ibidem*, 19.

the reign of Catherine II. Enlightenment public opinion became independent and detached from Enlightenment court opinions. The time had come to critical reflection of civilizational and moral deeds and further perspective of Europeanization”²⁴.

One of the distinctive representatives of non-academic and independently developing philosophy was Grigory Savich Skovoroda, also called Russian or Ukrainian Socrates. He visited the Kiev Academy and later, in 1759, he took up the appointment at the Kharkov Academy. But since his opinions caused indignation within the academic environment, in 1765 Skovoroda decided to leave and set out for a journey to live wandering ascetic and meditative creative life.

As I already mentioned, the period of Catherine the Great's reign is the period of Radishchev's activity. I would like to take advantage of the following pages to expound a part of his authentic Enlightenment teaching within the outlined framework.

Andrzej Walicki writes on Radishchev's *Journey*: “the principal and the most pressing topic is the question of peasants-serfs”²⁵. I partly disagree with Walicki. In my opinion, the topic of serfdom is not the principal one in *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*. As I see it, it is a broadly understood problem of a man. Nevertheless, I think the question of serfdom represents decisively the fundamental question which negatively influenced Radishchev's fate in the context of the Pugachev insurrection and the French Revolution. I also think fundamentality of the motive of man appears in the abovementioned treatise *On Man, His Mortality, His Immortality*²⁶ as well. In this regard, I am in agreement with Copleston that centring attention to a man can be seen as the key motive of Radishchev's Enlightenment thought. Just in this work, Radishchev clearly formulated his attitude that human soul is a natural indivisible entity, the existence of which has to be accepted in order to understand the unity of human consciousness.

²⁴ Walicki, *Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od oświecenia do renesansu religijno-filozoficznego*, 26.

²⁵ Ibidem, 83.

²⁶ Aleksandr Nikołajewicz Radiszczew, “O czełowiekie, o jego smiertnosti i biessmiertii”, in: Aleksandr Nikołajewicz Radiszczew, *Izbranny filozofskije i obszczestwienno-politiceskije proizwiedienija* (Moskwa: Gusudarstwiennoje izdatielstwo politiceskoj literatury, 1952).

“I found a comforter for man in himself”²⁷. This idea can be helpful for introducing the above-announced motive of education and shaping a man. As can be seen, the Russian representative of Enlightenment elaborates the motive in two distinct levels: The first level of educational institution is school. Within this level, he pays attention to the context of theological academy. The second level is the level of parental education within which he presents his vision of ideal education and upbringing of an individual.

He comments on the first level, the level of school or academy, in the section *Podberež'e* section in which he meets a young seminarian traveling to St. Petersburg in order to get better education. Using the seminarian words, Radishchev notices that: “I see that our school belongs to a bygone age. [...] Aristotle and scholasticism still hold sway in the seminaries”²⁸. Regarding the nature of education, he critically remarks in the same way: “We know all the classical authors, but we know more of the critical interpretation of their texts than of what still makes them so appealing today, and promises them eternal life”²⁹.

In the stolen seminarian essay, we can read: “Look back; the time is still close behind our shoulders when superstition reigned, and all its followers: ignorance, slavery, the Inquisition, and many others. Has it been long since Voltaire cried out till he was hoarse, against superstition?”³⁰. These notes shape the intention of what educational institutions should bring to society, and wherein their Enlightenment role lies, to struggle against delusion and prejudices. A following comment from the stolen notes confirms this idea: “If aberration is to be the fate of our descendants, if they abandon nature and chase after phantoms, then it would be a very useful labour for a writer to show us from former events the progress of the human mind, when it broke through the mist of prejudices and began to pursue truth”³¹. Despite the fact that he mentions the writer using the singular form (by which he most likely means himself), and controverts with the milieu of theological academies

²⁷ Alexandr Nikolaevich Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), 40.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 78.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 80.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 81.

and seminaries, he reflects, in my view, on the process of institutional education as such. Radishchev also claims that this intention will be fulfilled soon.

The seminarian's comments point to an interesting particularity and difference between academic philosophical thinking and that of educated circles of metropolitan and nobleman intelligence: "By good luck I became acquainted with the family of a government official in Novgorod, had a chance to read some of his books, and learned some French and German. What a difference there is between the Enlightenment of the times when Latin alone was used in the schools, and the present!"³². Besides pointing to a value of institutional and private-domestic education, we encounter here a motive which resonates in Radishchev's Enlightenment thoughts – language. The above-cited passage points to a need for knowledge of foreign languages such as French and German, while Latin is in the position of some kind of ossification. Nevertheless, it is not Radishchev's last word in relation to classical philology.

There is another important aspect of language question: "But why", he continued, after interrupting his own speech, "why do they not, in our country, institute higher schools of learning in which the sciences are taught in the vernacular, in Russian?"³³. A need to know foreign languages as well as the emancipation of the mother tongue becomes the key matter in Radishchev's Enlightenment thoughts. It also represents the connecting line between institutional viewing of education and the level of individual education. This kind of education is pursued as a domestic education since it is a parental task and not the matter of lower school grades. It is necessary to bear in mind that the purpose of an individual's education is to shape him up to fully-fledged and harmonising power of society. Simultaneously, society should create the space for shaping an individual to fulfil these aims as well as to find his individual happiness.

The topic of individual education – which could be called Radishchev's philosophy of education – is elaborated in the *Kresttsy* section. Following the scene depicting a father, a minor nobleman who emotionally says goodbye of,

³² Ibidem, 78.

³³ Ibidem.

to his children leaving to start service, Radishchev reflects on what he wanted to lead and has led his children to.

It is just language that represents an important constituent of shaping a man and his education also on the individual level. He points out: “The antechamber of learning is the knowledge of languages”³⁴. Radishchev emphasizes the need to know Latin and also English, and adds an important note: “I did not neglect to acquaint you with various nations by teaching you foreign languages. But my first concern was that you should learn your own language, that you should be able to express your thoughts orally and in writing, without strain and without bringing sweat to your brow”³⁵. For Radishchev, the command of the mother tongue has not only individual extent, but also clear overlap into the interaction framework of an individual with society: “For the elasticity of the spirit of freedom, passing over into the representation of speech, trains the mind in firm conceptions, which are so necessary in all governments”³⁶. What can be seen in this idea is how much the mutual influence of a man as an individual and society is important to Radishchev. He presents the complex and general intention of his children education that is pitted against manners noblemen had to act in, which means contemporary shape of tradition Radishchev was contemptuous of: “Do not be angry with me if you are sometimes ridiculed because you have no courtly bearing, because you stand as is most comfortable for your body, and not as fashion or custom prescribes [...] Do not be angry if you are neglected in society, especially by women, because you do not know how to flatter their beauty”³⁷. I think Radishchev is contemptuous not in order to insult, but to sharply and critically point out the deficiencies and relics of lifestyle contemporary to both, an individual and society, and with his writing he tries to contribute to a change with his works.

“Equipoise can be reached only by patient labor”³⁸. Patient labour can be viewed as the most important motive which has several levels of meaning: “Work with your body, and your passions will not be so easily stirred up;

³⁴ Ibidem, 225.

³⁵ Ibidem, 115.

³⁶ Ibidem.

³⁷ Ibidem, 113–114.

³⁸ Ibidem, 117–118.

work with your heart by practicing meekness, gentleness, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, and your passions will be directed to a good end. Work with your mind in the practice of reading, meditation, and the quest for truth or facts, and reason will rule your will and passions”³⁹. As can be seen, Radishchev perceives education as work shaping and improving a man on several levels, i.e. the physical level – including practical abilities, the intellectual one, and also the moral one.

The Russian thinker is convinced that mastering a craft is more valuable than mastering court manners. Radishchev writes about the need to command agricultural and carpenter’s skills. He insists on a good physical condition which should manifest itself by the endurance in running and swimming and skilful horseback riding. He also points to an important aspect: “I have also taught you the barbarous art of fighting with the sword. But may this art remain dormant within you, unless you are provoked to self-defense”⁴⁰. Regarding effort put to improving one’s physical condition, Radishchev prefers the following attitude: “I preferred that your bodies be hardened by momentary pain rather than that you grow soft and fat in adult life. Therefore you often went barefooted and bareheaded, and lay down to rest in dust and dirt, on a bench or a stone”⁴¹. He emphasizes the need to constantly consolidate one’s strength which is beneficial to health and longevity.

Similarly, as in the case of keeping physically fit, Radishchev offers his vision concerning the development of intellectual skills and moral shaping. His approach is full of emancipation typical of Enlightenment: “In your childhood and boyhood I did not burden your mind with ready-made deductions and other people’s thoughts; I did not burden your memory with useless facts. After I had shown you the way to knowledge, you yourselves, as soon as you became conscious of your power of reasoning, proceeded on the road that was opened to you”⁴². In education, an important role is played also by art and music, on which he writes: “In painting you will find true pleasure, not only for the senses, but for the mind. I have taught you music, that the string, vibrating in harmony with your nerves, may awaken your slumbering

³⁹ Ibidem, 118.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, 114.

⁴¹ Ibidem, 113.

⁴² Ibidem, 114.

heart, for music, by bringing our innermost spirit into motion, makes tenderness of heart a habit”⁴³.

After approaching the abovementioned attitude, Radishchev offers a clear vision of what the subject of moral perfecting should be. We could say that he primarily aims to lead one to be able to control and moderate own passions in various forms existent in human nature. But he insists that passions should never be suppressed since: “The root of the passions is good and is planted by nature itself in our sensuous organism. When our external and internal senses grow weak and dull, our passions, too, are weakened”⁴⁴. He is convinced that passions “arouse a wholesome energy in man, without which he would fall into lazy sleep. A completely passionless man is a fool and a lifeless block, incapable of doing either good or evil”⁴⁵. Radishchev repeatedly emphasizes moderation in passion since it “is wise; the safest way to travel is in the middle of the road. Excess in passion is destructive; absence of passion is moral death”⁴⁶. The middle road is the harmonizing one and it can bring a full-blown pleasure of life to a man, and also enables him to be a full-blown member of society.

The key motive of Radishchev’s thoughts on moral education is the motive of virtue. He divides virtues into the personal and the civic ones. Kindness and gentleness make the foundation of personal virtues, and these virtues are connected with an ability to bear burden of a suffering associated with their accomplishment. Interestingly, that he cannot see the civic virtues as proceeding from the personal ones. Within the context of his period, Radishchev considers “vanity and ambition”⁴⁷ to be the origin of civic virtues. He prefers personal virtues: “Inasmuch as virtue is the highest end of human action, its practice should not be impeded by anything. Disregard customs and usages, disregard civil and ecclesiastical law, however sacred they may be in human society, whenever their observance keeps you from virtue”⁴⁸. Thus, a hierarchy of norms and principles ruled by personal virtue can be seen and these

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, 118.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 121.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 119–120.

(even though in his period unsuccessfully) determine civic virtue. For this reason, it is important to practise personal virtues.

As can be viewed, for Radishchev, the action based on virtue is unshakably essential. It is supported also by the following attitude: “By complying with the usages and customs imposed upon us, we shall gain the approval of those among whom we live. By carrying out the injunctions of the law, one may gain the reputation of being an honest man. But in practicing virtue, we shall gain universal trust, respect, and admiration, even from those who do not wish to have such feelings for us in their souls”⁴⁹. I presume, in order to achieve this goal, it is important to practise the abovementioned moderation in passion, chiefly in relation to passions associated with power and reign. Inability to cope with these forms of temptation may lead to personal virtues betrayal in favour of the corrupted civic virtues. The Russian Enlightenment thinker perceives as problematic the fact that existing social situation can be corrupted on the level of laws and civic virtues as well as on the level of morals and customs accepted by society. He is aware of the power of these social influences; yet, he is still unshakeable in his conviction: “to remain immovably true to it [scil. virtue – O. M.]. Fear not ridicule, nor torture, nor sickness, nor exile, nor even death itself. Remain immovable in your soul, like a rock amidst tumultuous but impotent waves”⁵⁰. Having uttered this imperative, Radishchev supports his attitude with an example of a virtue standing against all contemporary laws and customs: “When the treacherous Senate of Athens handed the poison cup to Socrates, they trembled inwardly before his virtue”⁵¹. Using expressions such as the depravity of era, and superiority of personal virtues over civic ones, and also over social manners, customs, and even laws, Radishchev opens space for his attitudes to be interpreted as radical and rebellious. Radishchev admits possible tensions between the outlined values division and emphasizes the unshakeable power of personal virtues which are designated as kind-hearted and altruistic, and necessarily and naturally good.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 120.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

As it has been repeatedly mentioned above, the personal and social level are mutually connected and determined by each other. Following the afore-said commentary, we could say that they were affected by sharp contradiction in his times. However, the contradiction is not insuperable, but feasible with difficulty. Radishchev finds the obstacles just in the contemporary life of society, in prejudices and deeply-rooted customs, overcoming which he tries to contribute.

These efforts, his thinking reflecting the milieu of the Russian society of the 18th century, caused negative reaction to his thoughts. However, this negative reaction is basically determined by the negative evaluation of his work by Catherine II. Thus, as I mentioned above, the nature of this negative reaction and its possible grounding in the state-law reflections requires a closer study and evaluation.

Nevertheless, Radishchev was in fact imprisoned in The Peter and Paul Fortress and brought to St. Petersburg criminal court on Catherine II personal request. Originally, he was sentenced to capital punishment, but Catherine II changed the sentence to the ten-year exile to Siberia⁵². In 1796, after Catherine's death, Tsar Paul I allowed Radishchev to return from exile. Radishchev committed suicide in 1802. After publishing his *Journey*, Radishchev's fate can be considered to be the so-called first punishment of Radishchev.

In her monograph, Eliseeva⁵³ describes what may be called Radishchev's second punishment. She writes about the Bolshevik shaping of Radishchev as the first prophet and also a martyr of a revolutionary battle against the tsarist repression after 1917. This reception accompanied Radishchev up to the beginning of the current century.

Motives of the mentioned punishments and Radishchev's philosophical attitudes to the state and law as well as the closer view on the narrative strategy chosen by Radishchev will be the subject of my next paper.

Translation
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⁵² Komorovský, "Alexander Nikolajevič Radiščev".

⁵³ Jelisiejewa, *Radiszczew*.

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Abstract

The main framework of the present paper is constituted by the problematics of the Russian Enlightenment in its characteristic features and tendencies of its formation. The author expounds Enlightenment as an intellectual symbol representing the Western thought in Russian environment not only of the 18th century. Enlightenment as a period in the history of Russian philosophical thinking is fundamentally determined by the reign of Empress Catherine II. Her enlightening and reactive attitudes following from the events of 1789 are the subject of the author's interest. To illustrate the turbulent changes in Russian intellectual milieu after the French Revolution, the author uses an example of A. N. Radishchev who, in the spirit of Enlightenment, published his *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* in 1790. The author also describes the impact of publishing this work on Radishchev himself as well as its influence on the later period in the form of strong interpretative tradition.

Keywords: Enlightenment; Russian philosophical thinking; French Revolution; Catherine II; A. N. Radishchev