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PSYCHOLOGY IN RUSSIA STATE OF THE ART

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**Edited by
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The second volume of “Psychology in Russia: State of the Art” was prepared for the 11-th European Congress of Psychology (held at Oslo, Norway in July of 2009). The volume comprises the works of prominent Russian scientists representing various fields and directions of research in psychology: social and cognitive psychology, developmental and personality psychology, psychophysiology and clinical psychology, educational psychology and psychology of mass media, psychology of terrorism and psychosemantics, L.S. Vygotsky’s cultural-historical theory and N.A. Bernstein’s theory of movement behavior, and others.

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INTRODUCTION

This volume contains articles of Russian psychologists and is dedicated to the 11th European Congress of Psychology, which is held in July 2009, in Oslo, Norway. The main purpose of this edition is to introduce Russian contemporary psychology to international psychological community. The team of contributors occurred to be rather accidental. Most of them are psychologists who decided to participate in the Congress in Oslo and received travel grants from one of the national academic foundations: the Russian Foundation of Basic Research and the Russian Foundation for Humanities. A wish to participate in the European Congress, the financial support of the academic foundations and a manuscript in English, – these were the conditions of membership in this project. Such an occasional cast has both positive and negative aspects.

The positive side is following. While Soviet science (as the whole life in the Soviet Union) was built on hierarchical principle, and it was easy to point the centers of psychological science and its leaders, in contemporary Russia it's much more difficult, and even arguable to mark out the decisive authorities. Bright researchers and brilliant practitioners can be found in various towns on the wide spread of Russia, not only in Moscow and St-Petersburg, as it was before. Yaroslavl and Samara, Tomsk and Perm, Novosibirsk and Kemerovo, Rostov and Smolensk, Vladivostok and Ulan-Ude – the geography of psychological centers is vast, as well as the age range of the participants. Many young psychologists finished their postgraduate studies in the USA, Great Britain, Germany, and successfully implement American and European approaches. A considerable part of scientists remain constant in their devotion to cultural-historical psychology and activity approach based on works by L.S. Vygotsky, S.L. Rubinstein, A.N. Leontiev, A.R. Luria, P.Ya. Galperin and other native approaches (associated with the names of V.M. Bekhterev, V.M. Myasishev, B.G. Ananiev, V.S. Merlin and other outstanding scientists).

At the same time, the loss of Marxist ideology led to heated discussions and debates on philosophy and methodology of psychological science. Some maintain Marxist attitude and the theory of reflection (analogous to the correspondence theory of truth), some entrench constructionism with its pluralism of truth, others are carried away by transpersonal psychology, and some

try to build Christian psychology. So this random choice of the team and, accordingly, the articles, gives the reader an idea of Russian psychology.

The negative aspect of such selection of authors and themes lies in the impossibility to show all the scope of the psychological studies in Russia. Apparently, it corresponds to the book size. There is a score of psychological journals in Russia, such as Questions of Psychology (*Voprosy Psichologii*), Psychological Journal (*Psichologicheskii Zhurnal*), Psychology. The Journal of the Higher School of Economics (*Psichologia. Zhurnal Vysshego Shkoly Ekonomiki*), Methodology and History of Psychology (*Metodologia i Istoriya Psichologii*), Experimental Psychology (*Experimentalnaya Psichologia*), Cultural-Historical Psychology (*Kulturno-Istoricheskaya Psichologiya*), World of Psychology (*Mir Psichologii*), Moscow Journal of Psychotherapy (*Moskovskiy Psichoterapevticheskiy Zhurnal*), Historical Psychology and Sociology of History (*Istoricheskaya psichologia i sociologia istorii*), etc. Russian universities publish bulletins (university journals), as, for example, Moscow University Bulletin. Series 14: Psychology (*Moskovskiy Universitetskiy Vestnik. Seriya 14: Psichologiya*). Thousands of scientific papers and monographs in various fields of psychology appear. A number of humanities journals, as Human (*Chelovek*) and Social Sciences and Modern Times (*Obschestvennye Nauki i Sovremennost*) also publish psychological articles. Their subject area is really vast: from psychophysiology and neuropsychology to social psychology, from developmental and child psychology to legal and political psychology, from ethnic and cross-cultural psychology to ecological psychology and psychology of religion.

The flourishing of practical psychology and psychotherapy is worth mentioning as well. It started in the 1980s and in many respects was initiated by the arrival of Carl Rogers, with his demonstrational sessions of client-centered psychotherapy. The rapid development of Jungian psychotherapy, gestalt-therapy, psychoanalysis and Ericksonian hypnosis was set in 1990s, with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of ideological blinders, when democratic Russia opened up to the world. Overall, the visits of such prominent scientists as H. Eysenck, J. Bruner, V. Frankl, S. Grof, M. Cole, A. Laengle, S. Magnussen, C. Maslach, K. Pribram, R. Sternberg, J. Wertsch, Ph. Zimbardo left an indelible mark in history and methodology of Russian psychology.

There is a widespread interest in psychology after the fall of the USSR in 1991 and the formation of the Russian Federation. Nowadays it is difficult to find a pedagogical university (they used to be called 'institutes' earlier

on) without a psychological department. Even such non-core institutions as State Technological University “Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys” and Moscow University of Design and Technology have graduate programs in psychology. Young psychologists are welcomed not only at the state-financed workplaces; there appeared private psychological companies specialized in recruitment, assessment and different types of psychological trainings. Psychologists are in demand during all sorts of electioneering. There are a lot of self-employed and liberal professionals, mostly engaged in private practice as psychotherapists and trainers of personal growth. Scientific research is mainly conducted in Moscow, St.-Petersburg and Yaroslavl State Universities, in the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Science and the Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education, as well as other psychological departments and chairs in the key institutes of higher education.

Russian psychologists have their professional union. The Russian Psychological Society* numbers 52 regional representative offices, about 30 professional associations (the Association of Social Psychology, the Association of Psychophysiology, the Association of Neuropsychology, the Association of Legal Psychology and so on) and accounts for more than 30 000 members. The membership is voluntary and aimed for people with higher psychological education.

Russian psychologists are raised on the works by W. James and E. Titchener, S. Freud and C. Jung, L.S. Vygotsky and K. Levin, J. Piaget and J. Bruner, G. Kelly and Ch. Osgood, V. Frankl and E. Fromm, C. Rogers and M. Erickson, A.N. Leontiev and A.R. Luria, and perceive themselves as the members of international psychological community. They try to put into action the ideals of humanity and enlightenment.

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* The list of members of the Russian Psychological Society Presidium is provided in the Appendix to this volume (p. 637–639).