

***To All Universities and Academies of Sciences
To Our Authors and Readers***

It gives us great satisfaction to announce that beginning with this issue *Dialogue and Humanism* has become the much more versatile *Dialogue and Universalism*. The number of our subscribers, including leading libraries which also represent regions outside Western Culture, has increased and numerous new and outstanding authors have been making important contributions to the journal. With each issue we are turning into a more extensive international Forum of Dialogue and Universalism. This has enabled us to make a veritable exchange of information and ideas between prominent scientific and intellectual centres of the world.

It is our earnest wish to evolve from a periodical which has been open to all trends in philosophy and dialogue into one which is accessible to all sciences and cultures and to intellectuals in all the domains of praxis.

Sources

Our universalist periodical is the product of many years of commitment and battles waged against considerable obstacles; it is the outcome of extensive dialogue, to which it also owes its existence. The International Society for Universalism was not founded by accident in November 1989 at Warsaw University. The same holds true for a great international conference, entitled "The Meaning of Polish History", which was organized under the unique conditions of the autumn of 1988. It was attended by numerous members of the opposition and was held on the seventieth anniversary of the regaining of Polish independence. In 1993 Warsaw University witnessed the First World Congress of Universalism and in 1994 the First Polish Congress of Universalism with an equally large attendance of over 1,000 participants.

At the same time, international symposia of the ISU were held in West Berlin (1990), at Brock University (Canada), in Montreal, and twice in London, in 1992 and 1994. At present, our members are to be found in all the continents, including Australia where until recently the Vice-president of the ISU was the late professor Eugene Kamenka, a renowned historian of ideas. Today professor Jan Srzednicki, a member of our editorial board, is also working in Australia; he is the excellent editor of over fifty volumes of the celebrated Kluwer Publisher series (a special issue concerning philosophy in Australia, with dialogue commentaries by well-known Polish philosophers, is being completed).

A Time for Metatheory and Praxis Guided by Theory

All those undertakings were closely connected with our periodical which attracted favorable reviews in the professional and intellectual social press. It is still our aim to remain a publication serving leading research centres, and to present the newest discoveries, interpretations, discussions and scientific information. We hope that theory and, within universalism, metatheory, including metaphilosophy will retain concrete references and practical application in all the most prominent domains.

Our endeavours have been supported by such important businessmen as Jens Jacobsen of Denmark (active in France and Africa) and Dr. George Paunescu of Romania, who offered many generous awards for best studies which demonstrate the practical employment of universalism and its perspectives; our benefactors promise that similar awards will be presented at subsequent Congresses. The prize founded by Dr. Paunescu bears the beautiful name of his mother, Speranza, which denotes hope.

Special gratitude is due to Sir Sigmund Sternberg, the renowned British businessman and social-religious leader who helped us on many occasions (his assistance is mentioned in our note on pp. 115–118 of the present volume).

The Role of Philosophy, Science, Business, Mass Media and NGO's in the Prevention of Ecological Catastrophe

It is our opinion that the time has come to comprehend (meta)theory as the growing responsibility of all scholars and practitioners-intellectuals. The fortunate, "velvet" end to the cold war has obliterated the most hazardous problem of thermonuclear war hostilities but, paradoxically, it has disclosed other threats even more markedly. True, these threats might not appear to be pressing but their eventual outcome could be the self-annihilation of civilisation. The greatest danger to humanity, and Nature, still assumes the form of so-called local wars, demonstrated by the dramatic television coverage of the events in Grozny and Sarajevo. We have in mind predominantly perils facing the natural environment. It is not by chance, therefore, that we begin the new title and the new and considerably expanded edition of our periodical — now a monthly — by publishing the best papers from the Sixth Symposium on "The Role of Philosophy, Science, Business, Mass Media and NGO's in the Prevention of Ecological Catastrophe", held by the International Society for Universalism and our editorial board in the Polish Embassy in London, similar to the meeting organized there in 1992.

A Time for *Metanoia*

The symposium was opened by a speech given by professor Leszek Kołakowski; he stressed the necessity for *metanoia* conceived as a radical change in mentality. We plan to start a debate, comprehensive and universal, on the etymological sense of this word and on the principle, methods and various

analyses of the application of the perspective outlined by Kołakowski, obviously not solely in reference to ecology. Certain bitter remarks about his own discipline did not prevent the philosopher from demonstrating that despite all the prevalent difficulties, there is simply no other path than the universal transformation of mentality. In our opinion the consequences of his speech gave rise to lively comments during the symposium itself and subsequently in the highest ranking intellectual press.

Metanoia is certainly becoming a new categorical imperative in the crucial domains of life. It is also from this viewpoint that we wish to pursue research and publications from the Third ISU Symposium on "Relations between Judaism, Christianity and Islam in a Quest for a Metaphilosophy of Universalism". Two issues of our periodical have been devoted to this question, and it is with justified hope that we await further religious and philosophical solutions that could alter the present-day situation in the world.

Great Religions: Conflict — Complementariness — Synergy

Although many of us are agnostics or atheists (but not anti-theists!) of a materialistic, positivistic or radically humanistic orientation, we have always not only appreciated the role played by religion but have shown the highest respect for its undeniably great accomplishments. As early as 1979 we published two enthusiastic articles about the philosophical potential of the pontificate of John Paul II; in 1987 we devoted a whole issue to the Pope. Our plans to continue those motifs include a radical increase in the number of publications focused on the philosophical premises and consequences of the great religions of the Far East. An agreement made in 1993 with the Indian Council for Advanced Philosophical Studies enabled us to pursue this theme in two special issues on the fascinating and universal aspects of this culture. Preparations are also being made for discussions concerning philosophical transformation in China and Japan.

The reception of those cultures in the mass consciousness of the Western world cannot assume the form of New Age eclecticism, superficiality and pseudo-universalism. Quite possibly, the central problem will soon involve the still insufficiently appreciated sublation (*Aufhebung*) of increasingly rising disintegration and integration or even the synergy and universalisation of all cultures of the world. To modify the famous Biblical words: Unite or perish!

The Praxis of Our Great International Debate

The five extremely varied ethical studies by L. Kołakowski, R. Prasad (India), L. Swidler and H. Skolimowski (USA), and M.-P. Eboh (Nigeria) open the next series of our publications. A special issue about universalist ethics is being completed in the USA. It will be discussed at the Second World Congress of Universalism, which will take place at the University of Central Florida in

August 1995; a list of certain scientific and publication priorities is prepared for the new Bulletin by professor Michael Mitias, the co-organizer of the Congress.

The Congress provides an important opportunity for the continuation of our research; we are convinced that the great debate proposed in our periodical will be fruitful and challenging, thanks to a numerous and diversified participation of leading representatives of all currents in science and culture.

Our "International Library of Universalism" is part of a wider offer for further publication. We would like to encourage our authors and readers to embark upon a real and intense dialogue, *i.a.*, by sending their comments and discussions concerning texts which have already appeared in print. In this way we wish to establish a custom whereby consecutive issues would contain opinions concerning texts presented earlier in our periodical.

Universalism in Praxis: The Education of Intellectuals

Our proposal is addressed to all universities and academic centres; we are ready, to an even greater extent than before, to assume the role of a forum available to these institutions which, after all, comprise the intellectual avant-garde of the world.

We stress our willingness to cooperate, particularly in view of the fact that our new plans will probably entail significant initiatives: we have decided to establish International Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Studies which could provide a serious and mass-scale response to the appeal for *metanoia*. After a quarter of a century spent in the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada, professor Janusz Ostrowski, a physicist and ardent humanist, has launched a suitable project. He has also suggested the extremely apt name of the Studies — "Universitas" (for details, see pp. 121–123).

It is our firm belief that our project remains in accordance with the profound concern expressed in the appeal made by famous Italian institutions to all parliaments and governments of the world (see pp. 135–138).

*

We are inclined to conduct a discussion concerning the above mentioned issues with representatives of all sciences, trends of thought and cultures to whom this cordial invitation is extended.

It is our wish that our joint periodical should fully reflect its title: *DIALOGUE AND UNIVERSALISM*.

JANUSZ KUCZYŃSKI

President, International Society
for Universalism
Editor, *Dialogue and Universalism*

JAN SZCZEPAŃSKI

Chairman, Advisory Editorial Board
of *Dialogue and Universalism*
Former President, International
Sociological Association