

## IN MEMORIAM

JÓZEF MARIA BOCHEŃSKI\*  
(1902 - 1995)

Father Joseph Bocheński (also known by the name Innocenty), born in 1902, died on 8 February 1995. Some time between 1939 and 1948, Father Bocheński left Poland for a professorship at the Université de Fribourg Suisse, where he stayed for the remainder of his life.

Along with Jan Drewnowski, Father Jan Salamucha, and Bolesław Sobociński he was a member of the so-called Cracow Circle, which proposed a renovation of Catholic philosophy through mathematical logic (see Woleński [1995, 380-381]).

In history of logic, Bocheński carried on the program initiated by Jan Łukasiewicz; about this program, Woleński [1995, 397-398] wrote that

Łukasiewicz initiated a special program of looking at the history of logic through the glasses of modern logic. In particular, he regarded the old systems as predecessors of modern mathematical logic. According to Łukasiewicz it is not fair to fault or condemn traditional logic; such a blameworthy attitude was quite popular among the originators of modern logic who, including Frege and Russell, who maintained that modern logic completely broke with the past. Łukasiewicz thought that not everything was wrong in the past. In fact, argued Łukasiewicz, it was Descartes who basically caused the degeneration of logic and pushed it to psychologism. Even Leibniz could not stop this process, although he should be considered as a predecessor of modern mathematical logic.

Łukasiewicz's program meant that every revolution in doing the history of logic. Łukasiewicz himself discovered that the Stoics constructed propositional logic. He also rehabilitated the logical inventions of the medieval Schoolmen. Another of Łukasiewicz's results was a reinterpretation of Aristotelian syllogistic in terms of modern logic. He also pointed out that many-valued logic is rather non-Stoic than non-

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Aristotelian, because the Stoics very strongly defended the principle of bivalence, but Aristotle doubted this principle so far as they concerned statements about the future. Several Polish logicians continued Łukasiewicz's program, among them . . . Bocheński, . . .

whose interest in the history of logic resulted in publication of the major study *Formale Logik* [Bocheński 1956], of which *A History of Formal Logic* [Bocheński 1961; 1970] is the translation by Ivo Thomas, as well as a large number of papers on the history and philosophy of logic, especially on ancient and medieval logic, and the history of modal logic.

Bocheński's [1954] paper "Spitzfindigkeit", although largely ignored and intended as a caricature of classical arguments against formal logic, nevertheless received undue serious attention and aroused controversy on the part of historians of logic Jean van Heijenoort [1957] and Sof'ya Aleksandrovna Yanovskaya [1962]. Bocheński's [1973] article on Yanovskaya gave the strong impression that van Heijenoort included him, Bocheński, among those who (in van Heijenoort's words) "vent their prejudices about logic while they talk about its history without knowing close up." But in fact, van Heijenoort was attacking Prantl, if anyone, not Bocheński. Soviet Russian historians of mathematics such as the late F. A. Medvedev developed a negative impression of Bocheński on account of the "Spitzfindigkeit" paper and Yanovskaya's serious and extended attack on it, especially with regard to Bocheński's portrait of Descartes' attitude towards formal rigor. This episode is recounted by Bocheński in his [1973] article on Yanovskaya and by Anellis [1994, 168–170; 1996, 79], the latter also examining some of the consequences of this attention. Bocheński was astounded that anyone should have taken this article seriously.

As one of the founders and original editors, with the late Thomas J. Blakeley, of the journal *Studies in Soviet Thought* which began publishing in 1961, he also contributed articles to that journal on the history and philosophy of formal and dialectical logic in the Soviet Union, wrote on the Soviet-Russian historian and philosopher of mathematics and logic Sof'ya Aleksandrovna Yanovskaya, and with L. H. Hackstaff wrote on A. A. Zinov'ev's work on many-valued logic, in particular the Russian original of Zinov'ev's *Philosophical Problems of Many-Valued Logics*, of which this [1962] article with Hackstaff was an exposition and review.

In his article "Soviet Logic" [1961a], Bocheński devoted considerably more attention to philosophical logic or philosophy of logic and related issues than to research by Soviet logicians on the frontiers of mathematical logic. Unlike other contemporary writers on the history of

logic in Russia in the Soviet period, however, he did not dwell on the ideological battle between the dialecticians and the formal logicians. Indeed, referring to his own monographs on Soviet dialectical-materialist philosophy, he wrote [Bocheński 1962a, 36, n. 8] that 'in logic perhaps more than elsewhere, it is quite incorrect to speak about a "Stalinist" period; it was Stalin who operated the "liberalization" after having imposed silence.' This did not protect him from charges levelled by E. M. Fels [Fels 1963, 254] that his [1962a] "Preface" to Guido Küng's bibliography of mathematical logic and foundations of mathematics in the USSR, 1917–1957

overemphasizes the way in which the dogmatic zeal of politically motivated writers and the intellectual inertia of public ideologists have inhibited and retarded the progress of Soviet work in this field, as has been apparent especially among philosophers. Such emphasis tends to obscure the genuinely great importance of technical contributions by Russian logicians.

Knowing what we do today about the history of logic in the USSR, Fels' criticism on this score is fundamentally unfair, in particular since Bocheński actually devoted a relatively small amount of space to the issue of ideo-logical struggle in his "Preface" to Küng's bibliography. Nevertheless, whatever else might be said of Father Bocheński's orientation and views on "Soviet" logic, he was one of the few philosophers with training in logic and interests in both the history and philosophy of logic during the period of the 1960s and 1970s who was willing and able to give serious consideration to the work of Soviet workers in logic. And this, in conjunction with his earlier interest and contributions to the general history of logic, suffice to have made Bocheński an important and influential figure in the history and historiography in the mid-twentieth century.

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*The Editor*