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Edward Rozek: A Teacher's Gift

by Steven Alan Samson

I must admit that I have been a rather slow student. All of my life God has been teaching me a lesson about the vanity of fame and fortune: what most of us, myself included, strive for day and night.

In a recent dream, I imagined myself walking down the corridor of a lecture hall—quiet, empty and dark—at the University of Colorado. It appeared that I was a courier bearing a secret dispatch for my old mentor. When I greeted him in the darkened hall, he took me aside and said: “I am dying.” Suddenly, I awoke, several hours before dawn. In the stillness of the house, I sat in my easy chair and gave myself over to nocturnal reflections, relieved it was only a dream. Some time afterward, I received a long letter from him that described his recent trip to Europe to attend the funeral of his tank commander, Gen. Stanislaw Maczek. He illustrated the consequences of the betrayal at Yalta by recounting the general's subsequent life in exile. As I read, I knew that it was not just Gen. Maczek's story he was telling me. Between the lines, I could discern his own.

To some, God gives the gift of perseverance: the ability to stand in the face of persecution, the fortitude to endure having so much of what they cherished snatched away, the character to withstand being unjustly passed over due to differences of principle. These are some of the qualities of my mentor, Edward Rozek, has exhibited as teacher on the nearly three decades I have known him. He has been one of my chief guides: a Virgil to my uncomprehending Dante, who

showed me the perils of the journey ahead. He is the one professor I remember who touched my soul, who exemplified the kind of strength that may be gained through suffering, and beyond suffering, faith. If his word was his pledge, even more was his life his testimony, bearing the marks of mortal combat with Nazism in his body and moral combat with Communism in his soul.

As I reach back through the years, beginning in 1967, I can now appreciate more fully many of the lessons he set before me. Two books stand out in my mind: *The Origins of Russian Communism* by Nicolas Berdyaev and *The Question of German Guilt* by Karl Jaspers. Later I came to know these as the works of “existentialist philosophers,” although in this initial contact we skipped the usual formalities. Instead, I was plunged immediately into the passionate witness they bore against the false gods of the age. As a result, the agenda of my university education slowly, fitfully, began to take shape in response to the implicit change.

I went on to read more of Berdyaev and Jaspers, but did not stop there. Neither did I look back. The issues I wrestled with then engage me even now. Memories from these years frequently stray into my dreams. My late-night dream-walk in a corridor at the University of Colorado reminded me that we walk through life, darkly. Dr. Rozek confronted us in class with the specter of man's inhumanity to man. Who could fail to hear the force of words that rose from the depth of personal experience, that rebuked the proud halls and

mighty towers that could not shroud the fire that pulsated from this man when he stood in front of his students? He was a dignified voice, a cultivated voice. It took much effort for me to hear him, because it was also to my ears a foreign voice. In time and with effort, I learned to attune my ears to the cadences of his speech.

And what a remarkable voice it is! He always spoke with quiet authority, with conviction, about the blight of totalitarian oppression and, closer to home, the petty tyrannies that waylay us. If he was, on one hand, the lightning rod of conservatism on campus, he was also, first and foremost, my teacher: *our* teacher. Few men have commanded such respect from their students. We crossed picket lines in 1970 to take our final exams. Our contract with him did not contain an escape clause. We voted with our feet (one his his favorite phrases in another context) by coming to class. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's explanation in *Out of Revolution* of “why teaching is a public trust” is perfectly natural to me, for I have sat under a genuine “public professor” who addressed critical issues and who “uttered this ‘all or nothing’ from his public *Katheders* (chair).” Dr. Rozek embodies the old ideal of the university as the keeper of the nation's conscience.

I never really understood the battles that raged about us on campus in those days. Yet I learned to discern with my heart the quality of character and to cleave to what

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proved true. Understanding came later. Amid the trials of a cultural revolution, which caught us up and swept us along, Dr. Rozek represented the priority of principle over the fashion of the moment.

Certain phrases come back to me, especially those directed toward the campus liberals, with whom he seems to carry on an extended debate. "You are entitled to the courage of your confusions," he would reply to a liberal's heedless remarks. Yet he was fair-minded and showed the greatest respect for "honest liberals," like Sidney Hook, who condemned the totalitarianism of Soviet Communism and campus leftists alike.

I am impressed by the men, like Sidney Hook, Edward Teller and Nikolai Tostoy, he brought to campus through the W.F. Dyde Forum and his Institute for the

Study of Comparative Politics and Ideologies, which is held in the summer. My first real lesson in journalistic dissimulation came the morning after a talk by Milovan Drachkovich at the W.F. Dyde Forum in 1967, when the student newspaper carried an account filled with incredible dis-

tortions. I could not believe what I saw. How could the writer have even been in the audience? I wrote a letter to the editor in protest. It was published in a somewhat mangled form.

This initial experience with ideological deceit has been repeated countless times over the years. But one lesson, at least, began to sink into my heart then. It is a lesson that has served me well

whenever I have given heed: To guard my tongue. I was raised in an open society, or so I was led to believe. I read Dostoevsky, but did not understand what it meant to be persecuted, to live underground, to speak circumspectly. If I absorbed anything from Dr. Rozek's classes, it should have been the realization that not everyone means us well. It is not healthy to be an open book to those who scorn books as mere pretexts, who are "enemies of the permanent things." This, then, is another of the lessons I learned, not just in the classroom, but in that laboratory of experience just outside its walls.

I left the university in 1974 and moved back to Oregon a year later. Much time would pass before I first became conscious of what *National Review* (Feb. 22, 1985) called "the persecution of Edward Rozek." In April 1983, I learned through a friend that Dr. Rozek had been indicted on multiple felony counts in connection with his summer institute. Long under attack for his political convictions, his integrity was now being challenged in full public view: all this, as I learned afterward, while recovering from a nearly-fatal car accident.

He had mentioned some trouble during one of my occasional telephone calls to him, but even with this early alert, I was unprepared for the drama that unfolded. The false accusations originally had been floated during the heat of his 1980 campaign for a seat on the Board of Regents. Although an investigation by the Board cleared him, a county judge appointed a special prosecutor. His home and office were raided by police officers. At one point, he

was handcuffed and taken to jail. For months after the indictment, it seemed that a political and judicial juggernaut was bearing down on him. Then, strand by strand, the highly-sensationalized case against him began to unravel. Finally, a year later, the last charges were quietly dismissed. No member of the press was present. It was not until I read Ann Donnelly's story of his ordeal in *Academic License: The War on Academic Freedom* (1988) that I knew even half of what he went through. I wept as I read it.

Last summer, he invited my whole family to come to Boulder so that I could attend the summer institute. We stayed in an apartment on campus. I showed my wife and four children the places that I had lived, studied and hiked: places that still occasionally haunt my dreams. It was so good to see Dr. Rozek back in his true element and, once again, to be drawn into the drama of international politics.

A few days after my strange dream, I pulled out my copy of Rosenstock-Huessy's *Speech and Reality* from the shelf. I had added it to my library late in 1983 while Dr. Rozek was in the midst of his ordeal. At the time, I was writing my dissertation and soon was to set the book aside. Now I took up where I had left off over a decade ago and was already engrossed in its discussion of pedagogy when I was struck by this passage describing the vocation of a teacher:

We speak our mind. Any thought about the life and death of our own group compels us to convey it to others. We cannot keep the thought to ourselves forever, however slow we may be to talk to our

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neighbors about it....Death cannot be fought in society except through engaging younger men to join the battle-front. Social disintegration compels older men to speak to younger men. Education is not a luxury for the sake of the younger individual; is it not very often their ruin? However, society needs allies in its fight against decline. The true form of social thought is teaching.

If that is true, where else should such a battle take place than at the confluence of *Wissen* and *Gewissen*: science and conscience?

The campus, it seems in retrospect, was my introduction to Vanity Fair. If not my ruin, it was nevertheless in many ways a rough awakening, as is any education worth its salt. My educational quest continues, perhaps because, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, I am ever wont to pick up my burden and

carry it further. It is this journey of the spirit that I remember most from those years. It was, for me, the beginning of the life of the mind. Through the assistance of Edward Rozek, it has also been a pilgrimage of the heart.

Philosophy begins with the recognition that we are dying. The question then is how we use the time and opportunities given us: how to be faithful stewards of the gifts entrusted to us. All else is vanity. ♦

Trouble in "The Body"

by Robert Lindinger

"To judge from our speech one would think that we do not sin and never have problems," writes James M. Boice, wondering if most Protestants go through life without ever confessing anything to anybody.¹ What motivates this pretense of a problem-free existence? We might look to how medieval theologian Anselm admonished a contemporary, "You have not considered the greatness of the weight of sin."²

How destructive of true fellowship is this failure to confess sin? Rev. Ray C. Stedman explains:

It goes against the grain to give an image of oneself that is anything less than perfect, and many Christians imagine that they will be rejected by others if they admit to any faults.

But nothing would be more destructive to Christian "koinonia"—or fellowship—than the common practice today of pretending not to have any problems.³

How can we understand the seriousness of this lack of true fellowship? We look to the words of the Apostle John:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:6-7)

What should the church do in light of the reality of the situation, that little confessing, sharing, admonishing, supporting, or restoring is actually practiced?

How much more pressing this is since, as Richard Ganz maintains, "everyone who comes to Christ and into the Church has real needs, concerns, fears, hurts, scars, and sins which must be faced."⁴ Indeed, Paul tells the Corinthians that "there should be no schism in the body...members should have the same care for one another...if one member suffers, all the members suffer..." (1 Cor. 12:25, 26).

What then should the church do about this trouble in the body, this problem of broken fellowship with God and with each other because of sin? Ganz tells us that the church should be "the place where broken people are put back together again, to the good of the Church."⁵ But how might this be accomplished? A proposed resolution of this problem of fragmented

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